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German paper: Ron Arad is alive in Iran

ALON PINKAS

RON Arad is alive and being held by Iran, the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, one of Germany's premier newspapers claims in a story published today.

It says that negotiations between Israel and Iran on his release are being mediated by Germany and have reached an advanced stage.

"We have no information on this. I don't know anything about this," Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's spokesman Oded Ben-Ami told Reuters.

Senior security officials said "no new signs of life" have been received regarding Arad. Other officials involved in attempts to locate Arad refused comment.

The F-4 Phantom in which Arad was back-seater was shot down over Lebanon in October 1986. Both the pilot and Arad ejected successfully. The pilot was rescued by Israeli helicopters but Arad was spotted coming down in an Amal-held area and he was taken prisoner. His whereabouts have remained a mystery since.

The paper said that German State Secretary Berndt Schmidt has been mediating between Israel and Iran. According to the story, Iranian and Israeli negotiators sit in separate rooms and relay information through the German.

The paper says that Tami Arad visited Iran in the last year, and recently received a video and a letter attesting to the fact that her husband is alive.

It claims that in exchange for Arad's release, Iran is demanding the release of kidnapped Lebanese Shi'ite leaders Mustafa Dirani and Sheikh Abdel Karim Obeid, and Hamas leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin.

Israel, said the Allgemeine Zeitung, is demanding Iran cease its support of Hizbullah and extremist Palestinian Islamic groups.

The paper disclosed that Iranian intelligence chief, Ali Fakhri, visited Germany on several occasions in the last year.

Shimon Shamir gets official appointment to Amman

DAVID MAKOVSKY

AS expected, Prof. Shimon Shamir, director of Tel Aviv University's Tami Steinmetz Center of Peace Research, was named ambassador to Jordan last night.

Zvi Elpeleg, an analyst specializing in Palestinian Affairs at Tel Aviv University's Dayan Center for Middle East Studies, was named to Ankara. Shamir - who served in the past as ambassador to Egypt - and Elpeleg were the two political appointees among the seven ambassadorial appointments made.

The others named were: Yehuda Milo, deputy director-general for European Affairs, to Rome; Gabi Padoa, head of the Foreign Ministry's interreligious department, to Bern; Yossi Gal, deputy director-general for information, to The Hague; Moshe Melamed, No. 2 official at the New York consulate, to Mexico; and Yossi Hasiin, who worked in the Latin American department, to Caracas. With the two academic appointments, there are now four academics who have been named to diplomatic posts as political appointees, including Prof. Itamar Rabinovich in Washington and Aliza Shenhar in Russia.



Mourners surround the body of Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, who was buried in Jerusalem yesterday. (Brian Hendler)

300,000 pack Jerusalem's streets for Rabbi Auerbach's funeral

HERB KEINON

AN estimated 300,000 people took part in yesterday's Jerusalem funeral procession for Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, called "the halachic authority of the generation."

"People were drawn to Rabbi Shlomo Zalman," said Yitzhak, a kollel student from Ashdod. "He shied away from public attention, and did not have great rhetorical skills. He did not have a staff, or build up an empire. But people were drawn to him; people can sense greatness."

In the morning, tens of thousands streamed to Auerbach's two-room apartment in Jerusalem's Sha'arei Hessed neighborhood. The crowd included all factions within the Orthodox camp: Hassidim, Mitnagdim, Sephardim, and those from the religious Zionist camp.

"This was part of Rav Shlomo Zalman's greatness," said United Torah Judaism MK Avraham Ravitz, who along with everyone else was being pushed along by the massive crowd. "He was acceptable to everyone."

Ravitz said he could not remember a funeral procession that had such a cross section of Orthodox mourners.

National Religious Party MK Hanan Porat, who was also among the mourners, said religious Zionists recognize halachic greatness and do not differentiate between whether the rabbi is bareheaded or wears a knitted kippa.

"He was the scholar of the generation: he was straight and pure. Our camp held him in the highest regard," Porat said.

The funeral led to massive traffic jams, with the entrance to the city closed in the afternoon. Hundreds of police guarded the procession, and attempted to direct traffic.

Among those attending the funeral were Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert and Chief Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau and Eliahu Bakshi-Doron.

The mourners walked past large funeral notices for Auerbach in Sha'arei Hessed that variously referred to him as "the halachic authority of the generation," a "halachic pillar," a "minister of Torah."

Huge speakers were set up in the neighborhood to allow the vast majority of the crowd, unable to get close to the steps of Auerbach's home, to follow the proceedings. The sound of sobs and wailing eerily echoed off the Wolfson Towers on the other side of the neighborhood.

"Clear the steps, we are bringing down the corpse," a man yelled a number of times. People pushed forward. Those near the home pushed to get a look at the body, wrapped in a tallit. Those down the street pushed to get

closer to the home. People were packed so tightly that - although they were standing outside - the air felt so heavy it was as if the service were taking place indoors. Some people climbed on fences and rickety-looking staircases to catch a view.

The service began with a partial reading of Auerbach's will, and his wish that there be only a few eulogies and limited praise. His son, Avraham Dov, praised him by praising the large crowd that came out to honor him. The crowd recognized his father's special qualities, he said in Yiddish.

The service ended with his six sons reciting Kaddish. Auerbach is also survived by three daughters.

When the body was finally brought down the steps into a waiting ambulance, the huge crowd flocked down Ushishkin and Bezalel streets and followed it on foot to the Har Hamenuhot cemetery.

As the crowd walked down Ushishkin, all that could be seen were the buildings on either side of the street, and the roofs of a couple of cars parked on the sides. Everything else was covered with black hats, shimmering white collars, and a smattering of knitted kippot. It looked as if a river had overflowed its banks and consumed everything in its path.

IAF planes hit Hizbullah targets in S. Lebanon

ALON PINKAS and news agencies

AIR force jets flew two sorties yesterday, blasting Hizbullah targets in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, the IDF confirmed yesterday. The attack was the second in as many days.

Lebanese sources said that planes fired nine rockets in two raids, 30 minutes apart into targets on the slopes of the hills near Maydoun, on the southern edge of the valley.

Prior to the strikes, South Lebanon Army positions were shelled by mortars. IDF and SLA artillery responded.

In a related development, Hizbullah claimed that the SLA has abandoned a front-line outpost in Talousa, on the northern tip of the security zone, because it became "untenable" after two years of attacks.

The IDF confirmed the outpost was vacated and later de-

stroyed. "The outpost in Talousa was not captured, but rather was closed down and leveled following a change in operational deployment, resulting from a periodic assessment of the situation," the IDF Spokesman said.

A senior Northern Command source recently revealed that the IDF is reevaluating the entire fixed line of outposts in the security zone, and is gradually replacing SLA units in some front-line outposts, as well as shutting down other positions. The source presented these policy changes to military correspondents last month.

Hizbullah said the Talousa pullout showed Israel was unable to defend the outpost due to its improving tactics.

The outpost was attacked 56 times between January 1, 1992, and December 1, 1994, Hizbullah said. IDF records confirm that figure.

"It had become a shooting gallery," a south Lebanese security source told Reuters. "Hizbullah was attacking it every day."

Lebanese sources said the SLA abandoned Talousa on Friday, and the IDF leveled the fortification over the weekend.

"The Israeli army is working very hard to improve a new position two kilometers to the east. There are a lot of cranes and bulldozers there," the sources added.

Last November, Hizbullah captured 12 members of the Talousa garrison, and last Decem-

COL agreement due to be signed today

MICHAEL YUDELMAN

THE Histadrut and the private employers are due to sign the COL increment agreement at 1:30 p.m. today, ensuring a 2.6% raise in workers' March pay slips.

The agreement was made possible by the understandings reached last night by both sides' representatives, who were negotiating the work agreements.

The bone of contention delaying the COL agreement had nothing to do with the COL increment itself, but rather focused on the industrial quiet clause in the work agreements - different and separate from the COL agreement - and the procedure for dealing with labor disputes.

The employers exploited the closeness of the date on which the COL increment is to be paid to pressure the Histadrut on the clauses in dispute by refusing to sign the COL agreement until the other issues were settled.

Both the public sector - including the Treasury - and private sector had already announced that they would pay the COL increment with this month's wages. The only ones whose increment was not ensured were some half a million unorganized workers, who are not on the collective wage agreement and whose employers do not belong to the economic organizations' coordination bureau, the forum representing the private employers.

These workers can only be paid the COL increment via extension orders which the government can issue only after the COL agreement is signed.

Yi'ud Party, Knesset faction disintegrating

SARAH HONG

YI'UD is breaking up as a party and as a Knesset faction after its secretary-general Hemi Doron resigned in a huff yesterday.

Doron's move was preceded by the resignation of the party's director-general Dror Stern.

Yi'ud, a Tsomet splinter, formally commands three Knesset seats: those of Energy Minister Gonen Segov, Deputy Housing Minister Alex Goldfarb and MK Esther Salmovitz.

Salmovitz refused to enter the coalition with Segov and Goldfarb, creating the first split in Yi'ud. This was followed by squabbles between Segov and Goldfarb over the party funds. As things stand in Yi'ud now, no one is talking to anyone.

Yi'ud was formally formed as a separate party last year when it broke away from Tsomet, but never got off the ground politically. Its main office in Tel Aviv was shut down and the few employees were sacked.

Contracts with suppliers were hurriedly terminated. The party has no offices now, apart from private bureaus of the three MKs in their home towns.

Doron, a Rishon Lezion city councilman, cites as his reason for quitting his Yi'ud post "the ugly and ludicrous situation in the party."

He intimated that he places the blame for the final breakdown on Goldfarb.

Soldier wounded by boyfriend's stray bullet

SOLDIER Merav Darmoni was seriously wounded yesterday afternoon by a stray bullet from the gun of her boyfriend, a 20-year-old soldier.

Darmoni's boyfriend came to her home in Jerusalem's Neveh Ya'acov neighborhood yesterday afternoon carrying his Uzi sub-machine gun. Shortly after entering the apartment, the gun accidentally fired and Darmoni was hit in the stomach.

She was treated by a Magen David Adom crew and taken to Hadassah-University Hospital, Ein Kerem, where she underwent surgery. Police arrested the soldier, who said the bullet was fired while he was disassembling the weapon. He was later turned over to the Military Police. (Him)

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Labor faction blocks Kahalani

LABOR'S Knesset faction yesterday effectively blocked MK Avigdor Kahalani from submitting his Golan bill to the plenum when it voted 28-5 to impose party lines preventing members from submitting a private member's bill without faction approval.

Kahalani's bill called for a majority of more than 50% of all voters in a national referendum and a majority of 70 MKs before any amendments could be made to the Golan Heights Law.

As he left the meeting, Kahalani accused the prime minister of pushing him into a corner. "The door has been closed on me but I will find a window and climb in," he said. He did not rule out a High Court appeal on the subject, but said he would not leave the party because of the ruling.

The faction's decision was later attacked by Golan residents and the Likud, who accused Yitzhak Rabin of reneging on pre-election promises not to withdraw from the Golan. "The Labor party is adding insult to injury with its decision on enforcing party discipline on the Golan issue when this acts as a clear message to Syrian President Assad that the Labor party has decided to yield the Golan," said Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu.

The meeting was emotional and tempestuous. Rabin objected to the bill being raised, saying it could not come at a worse time. "It could lead to a breakdown in the talks with Syria. In its talks with Syria, Israel is seeking to neutralize Hizbullah and stop the bloodshed in Lebanon. We have

LIAT COLLINS

to provide an answer to soldiers in Lebanon and the key is not in Beirut but Damascus," Rabin reportedly said.

He added that the Syrians were not willing to return to the talks and they were perceived by the rest of the world as responsible for the breakdown in negotiations. Raising legislation strengthening the Golan Heights Law would be perceived as accepting responsibility for the halt in talks, Rabin reportedly said.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres also vehemently attacked the bill and Kahalani, stating that a minority in the party cannot enforce its opinion on the majority. "By what authority are five MKs seeking to impose the majority

they don't have?" asked Peres, referring to Kahalani and four other Labor MKs who joined him or a similar bill: Emanuel Zisman, Yoram Lass, Ya'acov Sheffi and Gedalya Gal.

"They are turning us into a laughing stock," Peres reportedly said. "They are not the only ones with a problem of conscience. We also have a problem of [how to ensure] the existence of the Jewish people." He said his sleep was no less disturbed than Kahalani's "but if we miss the peace process with Syria because of the bill, the problems that will follow will affect [all] Israel and not just the Golan Heights." He said there were currently no significant talks with Syria, and the bill would be a signal to Syria that there was nothing to discuss. He

accused the five MKs of joining the Likud and forcing Syria to join forces with Iran or Iraq.

"We haven't reached discussions with Syria and haven't shown them even one map," Rabin interjected.

Deputy Defense Minister Mordechai Gur also called on Kahalani to stall his bill so that the break in talks with Syria would be the Syrians' own fault.

Apart from imposing party discipline on Kahalani, the faction also voted against Gal's suggestion to postpone the faction decision on the subject by a week. Later, the Knesset Secretary confirmed he had a letter from faction chairman Ra'anan Cohen ordering him not to give Kahalani time on the plenum floor for the bill.

Rabin defends easing of closure

LIAT COLLINS

PRIME MINISTER Yitzhak Rabin yesterday defended his decision to ease the closure of the territories despite the threat.

Although the closure had prevented terror attacks during the last month, strict enforcement would cause such economic hardship among Palestinians that the situation could explode, he said.

"Although we could impose a one-sided total separation - we almost don't need Palestinian workers now because of the import of foreign workers - the separation should be imposed gradually," Rabin reportedly said at the meeting.

Regarding economic aid, he said: "If we give this money to Gaza, we cannot be sure today that it would go toward creating employment. I don't want to elaborate."

Rabin said he differentiated between the closure and continued political negotiations. He repeated his stand that terror is the main obstacle to the negotiations, and that by creating economic hardship, more Palestinians would be pushed into extremism and terror.

"If only life was so simple. It's not all black and white," Rabin said. "If the Palestinian Authority doesn't realize its obligations on combating terror, it will make the continuation of the peace process much harder. Therefore, we must continue the talks with the Palestinians, but make them conditional on measures which answer Israeli security needs."

He said the closure, however, had improved public feeling and increased support for the peace process. "It's significant that the opinion polls show a rise in support from 35% to 56%," he said.

The Likud, meanwhile, has filed a no-confidence motion over Rabin's statement that he had ordered an easing of the closure "in spite of the threat."

"Rabin is endangering Israelis, instead of demanding that Arafat get rid of the terrorist bases," the Likud faction stated in a press release. "This policy will lead to unnecessary victims and further successes for the terrorists."

NRP blasts Rabin for urging legal action against settlers

LIAT COLLINS

NATIONAL Religious Party MKs attacked Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin yesterday for his reported claim that Attorney-General Michael Ben-Yair is not being tough enough in applying the law against Jewish settlers.

Shani Yablon wrote to Rabin that pressuring Ben-Yair to take legal action against the settlers "seriously damages the nation's democratic infrastructure and destroys the independence of the judicial system."

During a meeting last week, Rabin reportedly blasted Ben-Yair for dragging his feet in indictments against suspected settler law-breakers. The attack on Ben-Yair came during a meeting on the findings of the Vardi Commission, which was established to monitor implementation of the Shamgar Commission on last year's Machpelah Cave massacre.

Yablon said the judiciary, and the attorney-general, must be allowed to operate freely, according to its own considerations.

MK Hanan Porat also blasted Rabin saying, "The prime minister is intent on using every possibility to dirty the name of the settlers."

In other developments, Hadas called on the government to abolish the joint patrols between Palestinian police and settlers in the Jericho area. In a press statement, the party said the patrols strengthened Ben-Yair's stand, which links the lack of enforcement of the law on Israelis in the territories with the relationship between the army, the police, and the settlers.

It also quoted the head of the Judda and Samaria police district, Cmdr. Alec Ron, as saying he would discuss the joint patrols with Ben-Yair. Ron said the joint patrols had been established to help prevent damage to property and theft of agricultural products and equipment.

Negev dump expansion faces stormy opposition

LIAT COLLINS

THE Knesset Interior and Environment Committee got down to dirty business yesterday with a sometimes stormy discussion on the decision to turn the Duda'im garbage dump near Beersheba into a modern landfill to serve the south and center of the country.

Environment Minister Yossi Sarid repeated his support for the plan and his promise to close the Hiriya dump outside Tel Aviv by the end of the year.

During the meeting, MKs Pini Badash (Tzomet), Shmuel Avital (Labor), Yigal Bibi (NRP) and Yossi Vannun (Labor) all attacked the decision to transport garbage from half of the citizens of the country to the southern site. They were joined in their opposition by southern mayors, local residents, academics from Ben-Gurion University and solid-waste experts.

Sarid countered with a claim that after 21 years of "dreadful neglect" it had been decided to close Hiriya and there was no

other solution to the garbage problem in the short term. "The solid-waste problem has reached emergency levels. Recycling and burning are not economically viable in Israel," he said.

Sarid said the landfill program, which would meet highly stringent standards, is the only solution because of the costs of the alternatives.

The committee drew up several recommendations on the subject of monitoring the operations of the privately-run landfill. The project's opponents claimed that the additional 400 garbage trucks that would travel to the site would cause traffic problems.

Sarid said the ministry was checking the possibility of using trains to transport the garbage. They also called for a full examination into alternative to burying waste, such as using combustion to create energy.

Next week the committee will travel to the site to examine the problems close up.

New ministers to be named today

SARAH HONIG

PRIME Minister Yitzhak Rabin has made the final decision about which ministers will get the Interior and Religious Affairs portfolios, sources in his office reported last night.

But he will only make his announcement at a special cabinet session today, they added.

According to the sources, Rabin will only let the lucky ministers in on the good news this morning.

This got the Labor rumor mill grinding furiously yesterday, with most Labor insiders agreeing that Police Minister Moshe Shahal still has the best chance for Interior, even though there has been an outcry in the party against putting so much authority in the hands of so ambitious a minister.

There is also consensus that Transport Minister Yisrael Kessar has the best chance for Religious Affairs, as he is trusted by Shas not to sack its employees or slow the flow of funds to its institutions. Shas is also not averse to Economics Minister Shimon Shetret, but opposes Tourism Minister Uzi Baram.

Shas has warned that a minister not to its liking in either of its former portfolios will send it into active opposition.

Late last night, Rabin was to confer with Shas leader Aryeh Deri to win approval on the dis-

position of the portfolios. Earlier, he had met separately with Shahal, Baram, Kessar, and Shetret, listening to their sales pitches, but making no promises. He then conferred with Foreign Minister Shimon Peres.

Meretz spokesmen continued to predict that Environment Minister Yossi Sarid has the best chance for Interior. But Shas has also campaigned against such an appointment, stressing that it would be considered a "hostile act."

Another source close to Rabin, however, said that "surprises shouldn't be ruled out."

He said that the only decision which had been made is that the portfolios would be transferred only to serving ministers and that the Interior portfolio would not be divided.

The source stressed that no new minister would be appointed now.

This means that Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin will not join the cabinet before summer, at the earliest. This prompted Beilin to state that he is "not interested in going into the cabinet for a few months only."

Nonetheless, MK Ya'el Dyan threw her hat into the ring to succeed Beilin. Her assumption is that Beilin will take any ministerial appointment offered.



Foreign Minister Alain Juppe welcomes PLO leader Yasser Arafat to Paris yesterday. (AP)

PLO heads meet today to discuss stalled peace

DAVID MAKOVSKY and news agencies

THE PLO Executive Committee is expected to hold a special session in Cairo today to discuss the lack of major progress in the peace talks.

Prime Minister Rabin has essentially linked progress on such issues as IDF redeployment from Palestinian population centers in the territories and Palestinian elections to steps taken by the Palestinian Authority against terror.

PA Chairman Yasser Arafat seemed to pour cold water on the idea that the Palestinians may

withdraw from the talks when he told France's TFI television over the weekend that he was totally engaged in the peace process.

However, he said yesterday the process was at an impasse because of Israel's delay in respecting accords.

He appealed to French President Francois Mitterrand to help move the process forward in a 30-minute meeting that concluded his three-day visit to Paris.

Arafat, who left for Tunis shortly after meeting Mitterrand, was going on to Cairo for the meeting.

Arafat said that he told Mitterrand: "what we are facing now, especially the delay in the accurate and honest implementation of what had been agreed upon and what we signed in Washington."

A French official said Arafat painted for Mitterrand a "very unsettling picture of the peace process," using the word "im-passe" several times.

French minister slams strident Arabs

PARIS (Reuters) - French Defense Minister Francois Leotard made unusually strong attacks on Iran, Iraq, Libya, and Syria at a Sunday conference on peace in the Mediterranean, saying the first three were most responsible for regional instability.

He rebuked Syria for its hold over Lebanon, comparing it to the control exercised over unempowered minors.

Leotard began in a back-handed fashion, when he said it is unfortunate the Arab-Israeli peace process is dominated by the US, rather than Europe.

"It is also unfortunate the process does not include a certain number of countries who are those mostly responsible for the region's instability - Libya, Iraq, and Iran," he said.

"They are characterized by seeking weapons of mass destruction... strategic weapons aimed at making them regional powers with destabilizing capacities."

He said all three sought increased numbers of long-range ballistic missiles, and Iran also purchased submarines.

"The ambitions of these countries can destabilize the region. I refer to Iran, which continues to brandish the speech of Islamic revolution and help terrorism. And I do not forget Iraq's recurrent threat against Israel," he said.

Referring to human rights, Leotard said: "Don't we see that external aggressiveness is proportional to internal violence. Iraq, Iran, and Libya are vivid proof of this."

On Lebanon, he said both Syria and Israel should withdraw their forces, and Syria should cease afterwards to consider Lebanon as "an minor is seen by law."

Leotard also said Algeria's destiny should be neither in the hands of "monolithic Islamic fundamentalism... or in the hands of [its current] authoritarian regime which ignores the results of elections."

He was speaking at UNESCO headquarters at a conference organized by the French Jewish Radio Shalom with help from France's TFI television channel and Egypt's al-Ahram newspaper.

Arab states deny plans for naval exercises with Israel

Jerusalem Post Staff and news agencies

EGYPT, Oman and Algeria denied yesterday an Israeli announcement that they would be among eight Arab countries taking part in a Canadian-sponsored joint naval exercise in the Mediterranean next month.

Defense Ministry officials said on Sunday Israel agreed in December, in a meeting of the multilateral committee on arms control and regional security, to hold the exercise off Tunisia.

It would be the first of its kind involving Israel and Arab states, and would include Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. Israel Radio said Jordan and the Palestinians would also take part.

But several countries promptly denied the report.

An Egyptian Defense Ministry source said: "There are no plans

to take part in any joint exercises with Israel, whether naval, ground or in the air."

An Algerian Foreign Ministry spokesman "strongly denied the report... (and) also questioned the motives of those behind such baseless allegations."

Oman's Ministry of Defense said in a statement that it "denies reports of newspapers and Israeli radio that the Sultanate of Oman will take part in the naval exercises in March... there is no basis of truth in those reports."

An Israeli official said yesterday it would be mainly a search and rescue exercise: some participating countries would send naval officers rather than ships.

Defense Ministry Director-General David Ivry revealed the plans for the joint exercise in an interview with Davar Friday.

Joint Border Police-Palestinian patrols planned

BILL HUTMAN

PLANS are under way to expand joint Border Police-Palestinian Police patrols to Judea and Samaria, Border Police Cmdr. Yitzhak Aharonovitz revealed yesterday.

The joint patrols already operating in Gaza are a "great success," and with IDF redeployment in Judea and Samaria will begin there too, he said.

"There have been many instances of disputes between Jews and Arabs, which were only brought under control because of the presence of joint patrols," Aharonovitz said.

IDF officer killed

LT. YONATAN Shalit, 22, of Upper Nazareth was killed yesterday when an army jeep overturned during training near the Neva'im base in the Negev.

Another soldier was slightly injured in the accident, and a third suffered bruises.

Hamas activist wounded in Khan Yunis drive-by shooting

GUNMEN firing from a car shot and wounded a local Hamas leader in Khan Yunis, the group's spokesman said yesterday.

Akram Salamah was shot in the legs as he left his house on Sunday evening to go to a local mosque, said Hamas spokesman Ezzat Salouji.

The identity or motive of the gunmen was not known. Police had no immediate comment.

Meanwhile, Palestinian Authority Secretary-General Tayyeb Abdel-Rahim said the opposition groups should express their views peacefully.

"Otherwise, they will be punished according to the law," he

told the pro-Arafat al-Hayat daily in an interview published yesterday.

Abdel-Rahim also said that Palestinian police three months ago arrested a man who allegedly was plotting to assassinate Arafat.

He said the man belonged to terrorist mastermind Abu Nidal's group, the Fatah-Revolutionary Council, which broke off from Arafat's mainstream Fatah faction in 1973.

The two groups have since been locked in a bloody conflict that has killed scores of activists from both factions.

With deep sorrow, we announce the passing of our beloved mother and grandmother

BRINA GENN

The funeral will take place Wednesday, February 22, 1995 (1 Adar 22, 5755) at 1 p.m. at the Herzliya Cemetery.

Transportation will be available from Jerusalem.

For details, call 02-522549.

Mourning by:

Her son, Gershon Genn (Gan)

Her daughter and son-in-law, Sonja (Ha) and Ariel Levanon

Granddaughters, and the entire family

Shiva at her daughter's home, 20/Alefi Lampronti St., Jerusalem.

The Israel Museum, Jerusalem
deeply mourns the passing of our dear friend
WOLF LESSER
and extends deepest condolences to
Ruth
and the family.

To Nurit and the children
We share your loss on the sudden death of
RAFI DINARI
A distinguished lawyer and devoted friend
Dr. A. Joffe,
and the management and staff of the
Herzliya Medical Centers

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Shahal: Police should guard schools

BATSHEVA TSUR

A PROPOSAL by Police Minister Moshe Shahal to have policemen guard the country's schools would be "more costly and less effective" than the Education Ministry's arrangements, Deputy Education Minister Micha Goldman said last night.

"Shahal's proposal is only one of many which have been brought before the committee which I head (on the issue of school security), and I shall present all the proposals to the prime minister at the end of March," Goldman said.

He said that the Education Ministry had other ideas which seem better to him, "but we have to examine everything in the context of the security situation, and the cabinet will then decide."

Shahal told members of the Knesset Education Committee that "the police are in charge of internal security, and should also take care of guarding schools."

He said that the first step was for all educational institutions to be properly fenced in and have alarm systems. This would entail a one-time outlay of NIS 11.5 million, he said.

In addition, he proposed stationing 650 policemen at the gates of schools in areas where security is most needed. In other areas, Shahal said, it would suffice to have regular police patrols outside the buildings. For this purpose, the force needed an additional 350 police, he said. Altogether, 1,000 new recruits would thus be needed.

Shahal said stationing policemen near schools would lead to a general lowering of security risks and crime in those areas. This would require a budget of some NIS 70 m., he said.

However, Shahal noted that his plan could not be put into operation before September 1996.

Goldman told the committee that there are currently 2,600 guards, aided by 100 police patrols, and that the Education Ministry had allocated NIS 100m. for this purpose in the current academic year.

Nigal Frechter, the prime minister's adviser on terrorism, pointed out that there is no end to the security arrangements which could be instituted, but there are budgetary constraints. He said that fencing in schools is important and that there should be a police presence when children arrived at school and when they go home.



Two youngsters plant a kiss on their snowman yesterday on the Golan Heights. The good weather and the snow that accumulated recently in the area have been drawing many local tourists to the site.

Last Jews leaving Grozny

BATSHEVA TSUR

THE last four or five dozen Jews in Grozny are expected to take advantage of the cease-fire with the Russians and flee the Chechen capital, according to Haim Chesler, head of Jewish Agency activities in the CIS.

The cease-fire ended yesterday, but by press time there were no reports of renewed fighting.

Hotel accommodation and relief aid are awaiting the Grozny Jews in the southern Russian town of Pyotrogorsk, near Miner-

alvody, where some 50 other refugees are waiting for papers to make aliya.

Chesler said the agency had also arranged to give the potential olim Hebrew lessons during the approximately six weeks it takes to arrange exit papers for them.

Chesler, who arrived in Jerusalem from the area near the war zone, described the refugees as being in very poor health.

"Many of them spent about a month hiding in dank cellars and have developed skin disorders," he said. "Four or five elderly persons are in serious condition, after making the hazardous trip out of Grozny in uncomfortable vehicles."

Chesler said one man, who escaped through the city sewers, arrived in Pyotrogorsk with gunshot wounds in his arm, although his wife and children were unharmed.

Private eye asks court to keep police from questioning clients

EVELYN GORDON

THE police are guilty of rampant invasions of privacy — which in some cases are even destroying marriages — in their efforts to obtain evidence against a private investigator accused of illegal wiretapping, a petition to the High Court of Justice charged yesterday.

The court will hear the petition filed by investigator David Schneider, this morning.

According to the petition, the police suspect Schneider of bugging a hotel room in Herzliya Pituah. While searching for evidence, they found a notebook listing clients who had hired him to shadow someone, and who they had asked him to tail. Schneider said the police never questioned him about any of these people, and to the best of his knowledge, none had filed a complaint against him.

Four days ago, however, he discovered that the police had been calling all those listed in the notebook — both clients and subjects — to question them and persuade them to file a complaint, the petition said.

Schneider said that among them were husbands or wives who suspected their spouse was cheating on

them, but whose marriages were back on track after Schneider succeeded in disproving their suspicions. Many of these marriages, however, are on the rocks again because the police informed the suspected spouse that he or she had been tailed by a private investigator, Schneider said.

In one case, he said, a couple had been about to sign an amicable property settlement in a divorce, but the deal has been off since the wife found out from the police that her husband had her tailed.

None of the people being questioned, Schneider claimed, had anything to do with his alleged crime. He charged that the police were merely "fishing" in a desperate attempt to come up with something they could indict him for, in response to the massive pressure from the press on this subject.

Furthermore, he said, this method of investigation will destroy his business even if he is found innocent, since his clients blame him for the police's interference. The petition asks that police stop calling in people whose names are on the list unless they have a direct bearing on their inquiries.

Chief rabbis trying to ease requirements for converting adopted children from abroad

EVELYN GORDON

THE chief rabbis are looking for ways to ease the religious requirements imposed on non-religious people who want to convert an adopted child, Rabbis Yisrael Lau and Elhanan Bakshi-Doron said yesterday.

Knesset Law Committee chairman Dedi Zucker (Meretz), who met with the rabbis yesterday, said one idea they were considering was to merely require the parents to take some courses in religion. Another, he said, was to require the children to attend a religious school only for a certain amount of time, rather than throughout their school years.

However, he said, the rabbis also said they had trouble understanding why a couple willing to spend thousands of dollars and travel to the ends of the earth to adopt a child is not willing to send the child to a religious school or adopt the minimal trappings of a religious life-style.

Zucker told the rabbis there was no point in forcing the parents to make a promise they will

not keep, and said if necessary, he would not hesitate, together with Na'amat, to arrange for adopted children to undergo Conservative or Reform conversions overseas.

Under current law, such conversions enable the person in question to be registered as Jewish by the Interior Ministry when performed overseas, but not when performed in Israel. A case is now pending before the High Court of Justice, however, which challenges this distinction.

"Adoption is not just a matter for the religious," Zucker said. "It is the right of every citizen."

The rabbinate's position, however, is that such conversions do not make the child Jewish no matter where they are performed, because the halachic requirements of conversion include some knowledge of religious practice and commitment to adhere to it.

The chief rabbis agreed to meet with the Law Committee to discuss the matter further.

Committee finally set up to study conditions in state medical labs

JUDY SIEGEL

A COMMITTEE to investigate conditions in state medical laboratories has finally been appointed, several months after the Health Ministry agreed to do so. The committee, to be headed by Dr. Yosef Ribak, head of the Occupational Health and Rehabilitation Institute at Beit Levinstein, will present its recommendations to the ministry's director-general by June 30.

The union, representing 6,000 microbiologists and biochemists at government hospitals, standards institutes, district health offices and schools of medicine and pharmacy, claim that poor working conditions expose them to the

risk of cancer and that many lab workers have already contracted the disease. The lab workers, mostly women of childbearing age, are worried about poor ventilation and lack of protective equipment in their labs. The situation is especially severe in the ministry's standards labs in the century-old Beit Avihayil building in Jerusalem's Russian Compound.

The Civil Service Commission urged the ministry to evacuate them immediately in addition to shortening their working day from seven to five hours; they work a shorter week, but have not been moved.

MDA drivers holding out for accompanying medics

JUDY SIEGEL

FOR the fifth straight day, Magen David Adom's 200 ambulance drivers yesterday refused to go out on call, unless accompanied by a medic.

But MDA's management insisted that all of its mobile intensive care units, which have a doctor aboard, and most of its regular ambulances are continuing to provide emergency first aid and resuscitation.

Health Ministry spokeswoman Yifat Ben-Hai confirmed that Minister Ephraim Sneh intends to nominate a separate director-general to run MDA. Since December 1993, when Dr. Ya'akov Adler was asked by then-health minister Haim Ramon to leave, no replacement has been found. Instead, Yohanan Gur, 73, has been filling two positions — chairman of the MDA council and director-general.

Ben-Hai refused to confirm or deny reports that Sneh wants to bring back Amos Luria, who served as MDA director-general from 1986 to 1987. "He will name his candidate when he is approved by the MDA council," she said.

But she did confirm that both the Health and Defense

ministries are determined to replace a certain number of MDA's accompanying medics with "specially trained" soldiers, mostly during the evening and night, when civilian volunteers and national service women are not available.

The ministry does not see anything objectionable about the idea of replacing existing MDA workers with soldiers, Ben-Hai said. "Since a considerable amount of the MDA ambulance teams' work involves treating victims of terrorist incidents or national catastrophes,"

She did not say how many soldiers would be moved to MDA: 60 daily job slots for accompanying medics are unmanned, not including the 16 who may be fired. Military service laws will have to be changed to allow this. There are no plans to replace other public workers with soldiers, she insisted.

Meanwhile, Histadrut trade union chief MK Amir Peretz has expressed his "shock" over Sneh's plans to hire army medics, while dismissing as many as 16 MDA medics. He

said the Histadrut would give full backing to MDA workers in their struggle.

"Allocating accompanying medics was part of MDA's recovery program" approved by the Health Ministry, he said. "Any effort to evade responsibility for financing this will constitute a violation of the recovery program by the government."

In protest over last week's dismissal of six medics in Ramle-Lod, Kiryat Malachi, Ofakim, Sderot, Upper Nazareth, and Beit She'an, the union instructed all ambulance drivers not to go out on a call unless they were accompanied by a medic. These instructions excluded Jerusalem and Kiryat Shmona (because of their security problems), as well as all 16 mobile intensive care units. In some cases, the MDA staffer who mans the communications equipment in a station (who has undergone first-aid training) was sent out as an accompanying medic.

Union chief Eli Ben-Khassoun said he is in favor of adding personnel to ambulances, but taking "cheap labor" from the army to replace MDA staffers is unacceptable.

ISRAEL LANDS ADMINISTRATION

The Israel Lands Administration announces that the successful bidders for the lots listed below will not receive a VAT refund for infrastructure development costs, and will be given only a receipt from the company which carries out the infrastructure work. On receipt of payment, the company will submit an invoice to the local council and will transfer the VAT to the Treasury.

Lot 1: Invitation to Tender 25/94/Teve Alif - Issuing of plots for construction of 252 housing units in Shikma, Yotvata (Mazda Zor) in Mevo Sheva. Development Company: Yotvata Industrial Development Co. Ltd. Last date for submitting bids: March 10, 1995 at 12 noon.

Lot 2: Invitation to Tender 26/94/Teve Alif - Issuing of 2 plots for construction of 2 plots for Build-Your-Own-Home Program in Gza. Development Company: Rural and Industrial Development Tenders in Mazda Yotvata Ltd. Last date for submitting bids: March 30, 1995 at 12 noon.

Lot 3: Invitation to Tender 27/94/Teve Alif - Plot 151 for construction of one housing unit in Ramat Beit, Jerusalem. Development Company: Moriah Jerusalem Development Co. Ltd. Last date for submitting bids: March 30, 1995 at 12 noon.

Lot 4: Invitation to Tender 28/94/Teve Alif - Issuing of 7 plots for construction of 7 homes in the Build-Your-Own-Home Program in Gza. Development Company: Moriah Jerusalem Development Co. Ltd. Last date for submitting bids: March 30, 1995 at 12 noon.

All those who purchase tender booklets at the Israel Lands Administration, Hasha Region, 13 Derech Ha'Azusa, Haifa, (04) 35411, starting February 23, 1995, during regular working hours, will receive a corrected appendix to each tender. The appendix should be signed and submitted together with the bid.

ISRAEL LANDS ADMINISTRATION
Southern Region
Lease offered on Plot No. 992, for construction of a commercial building.
Tet Quarter, Beerseba - Invitation to Tender 29/94/Teve Alif
The Israel Lands Administration and the Ministry of Construction and Housing invite bids from interested parties in signing a 3 year development agreement, after which those concerned will sign a 45 year lease with an option to extend for another 45 years, for the plot, the details and building possibilities of which, at the time of publishing this notice, are:

Part of Plot	Approx. Area, sq.m.	Total Building Area, sq.m.	Minimum NIS	Deposit
38111	50	992	1,356	407
Urban Building Plan 48/110/93 indicates that a commercial building, with a building percentage of 30 on one floor, may be built on the plot.			618,835	85,000

* Urban Building Plan 48/110/93 indicates that a commercial building, with a building percentage of 30 on one floor, may be built on the plot.

The Israel Lands Administration reserves the right to accept any bid, or to reject all bids, including the highest.

The invitation to tender booklets will be available from February 23, 1995 on submission of a receipt from the Postal Bank for NIS100 in cash (including VAT for payment of tender booklets) or NIS200, per booklet, by bank transfer, to the Israel Lands Administration, Southern Region, Hasha Region, 13 Derech Ha'Azusa, Haifa, Tel. 04-35411, during regular working hours.

A bank check or bank guarantee in the sum of the deposit listed above should be attached to bid.

Last date for submitting bids: May 10, 1995 (7 PM). A bid not found in the tender box when it is opened, whatever the reason, cannot be considered.

ISRAEL LANDS ADMINISTRATION
Central Region
The Israel Lands Administration announces that the successful bidders for the lots listed below will not receive a VAT refund for infrastructure development costs, and will be given only a receipt from the company which carries out the infrastructure work. On receipt of payment, the company will submit an invoice to the local council and will transfer the VAT to the Treasury.

Lot 1: Invitation to Tender 30/94/Teve Alif - Issuing of 45 plots for construction of industrial structures in Erez Industrial Zone. Development Company: Erez Industrial Development Co. Ltd. Last date for submitting bids: March 8, 1995 at 12 noon.

Lot 2: Invitation to Tender 31/94/Teve Alif - Issuing of 45 plots for construction of industrial structures in Erez Industrial Zone. Development Company: Erez Industrial Development Co. Ltd. Last date for submitting bids: March 8, 1995 at 12 noon.

Lot 3: Invitation to Tender 32/94/Teve Alif - Issuing of 45 plots for construction of industrial structures in Erez Industrial Zone. Development Company: Erez Industrial Development Co. Ltd. Last date for submitting bids: March 8, 1995 at 12 noon.

Lot 4: Invitation to Tender 33/94/Teve Alif - Issuing of 45 plots for construction of industrial structures in Erez Industrial Zone. Development Company: Erez Industrial Development Co. Ltd. Last date for submitting bids: March 8, 1995 at 12 noon.

Lot 5: Invitation to Tender 34/94/Teve Alif - Issuing of 45 plots for construction of industrial structures in Erez Industrial Zone. Development Company: Erez Industrial Development Co. Ltd. Last date for submitting bids: March 8, 1995 at 12 noon.

Lot 6: Invitation to Tender 35/94/Teve Alif - Issuing of 45 plots for construction of industrial structures in Erez Industrial Zone. Development Company: Erez Industrial Development Co. Ltd. Last date for submitting bids: March 8, 1995 at 12 noon.

Lot 7: Invitation to Tender 36/94/Teve Alif - Issuing of 45 plots for construction of industrial structures in Erez Industrial Zone. Development Company: Erez Industrial Development Co. Ltd. Last date for submitting bids: March 8, 1995 at 12 noon.

Lot 8: Invitation to Tender 37/94/Teve Alif - Issuing of 45 plots for construction of industrial structures in Erez Industrial Zone. Development Company: Erez Industrial Development Co. Ltd. Last date for submitting bids: March 8, 1995 at 12 noon.

Lot 9: Invitation to Tender 38/94/Teve Alif - Issuing of 45 plots for construction of industrial structures in Erez Industrial Zone. Development Company: Erez Industrial Development Co. Ltd. Last date for submitting bids: March 8, 1995 at 12 noon.

Lot 10: Invitation to Tender 39/94/Teve Alif - Issuing of 45 plots for construction of industrial structures in Erez Industrial Zone. Development Company: Erez Industrial Development Co. Ltd. Last date for submitting bids: March 8, 1995 at 12 noon.

All those who purchase tender booklets at the Israel Lands Administration, Central Region, 68 Derech Patah Tikva, Tel Aviv, (03) 5838111, from February 23, 1995, during regular working hours will receive a corrected appendix to each tender. The appendix should be signed and submitted together with the bid.

ISRAEL LANDS ADMINISTRATION
Central Region
The Israel Lands Administration announces that the successful bidders for the lots listed below will not receive a VAT refund for infrastructure development costs, and will be given only a receipt from the company which carries out the infrastructure work. On receipt of payment, the company will submit an invoice to the local council and will transfer the VAT to the Treasury.

Lot 1: Invitation to Tender 40/94/Teve Alif - Issuing of 45 plots for construction of industrial structures in Erez Industrial Zone. Development Company: Erez Industrial Development Co. Ltd. Last date for submitting bids: March 8, 1995 at 12 noon.

Lot 2: Invitation to Tender 41/94/Teve Alif - Issuing of 45 plots for construction of industrial structures in Erez Industrial Zone. Development Company: Erez Industrial Development Co. Ltd. Last date for submitting bids: March 8, 1995 at 12 noon.

Lot 3: Invitation to Tender 42/94/Teve Alif - Issuing of 45 plots for construction of industrial structures in Erez Industrial Zone. Development Company: Erez Industrial Development Co. Ltd. Last date for submitting bids: March 8, 1995 at 12 noon.

Lot 4: Invitation to Tender 43/94/Teve Alif - Issuing of 45 plots for construction of industrial structures in Erez Industrial Zone. Development Company: Erez Industrial Development Co. Ltd. Last date for submitting bids: March 8, 1995 at 12 noon.

Lot 5: Invitation to Tender 44/94/Teve Alif - Issuing of 45 plots for construction of industrial structures in Erez Industrial Zone. Development Company: Erez Industrial Development Co. Ltd. Last date for submitting bids: March 8, 1995 at 12 noon.

Lot 6: Invitation to Tender 45/94/Teve Alif - Issuing of 45 plots for construction of industrial structures in Erez Industrial Zone. Development Company: Erez Industrial Development Co. Ltd. Last date for submitting bids: March 8, 1995 at 12 noon.

Lot 7: Invitation to Tender 46/94/Teve Alif - Issuing of 45 plots for construction of industrial structures in Erez Industrial Zone. Development Company: Erez Industrial Development Co. Ltd. Last date for submitting bids: March 8, 1995 at 12 noon.

Lot 8: Invitation to Tender 47/94/Teve Alif - Issuing of 45 plots for construction of industrial structures in Erez Industrial Zone. Development Company: Erez Industrial Development Co. Ltd. Last date for submitting bids: March 8, 1995 at 12 noon.

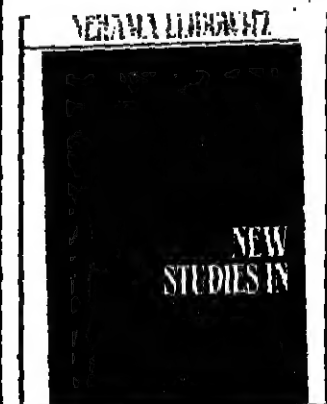
Lot 9: Invitation to Tender 48/94/Teve Alif - Issuing of 45 plots for construction of industrial structures in Erez Industrial Zone. Development Company: Erez Industrial Development Co. Ltd. Last date for submitting bids: March 8, 1995 at 12 noon.

Lot 10: Invitation to Tender 49/94/Teve Alif - Issuing of 45 plots for construction of industrial structures in Erez Industrial Zone. Development Company: Erez Industrial Development Co. Ltd. Last date for submitting bids: March 8, 1995 at 12 noon.

All those who purchase tender booklets at the Israel Lands Administration, Central Region, 68 Derech Patah Tikva, Tel Aviv, (03) 5838111, from February 23, 1995, during regular working hours will receive a corrected appendix to each tender. The appendix should be signed and submitted together with the bid.

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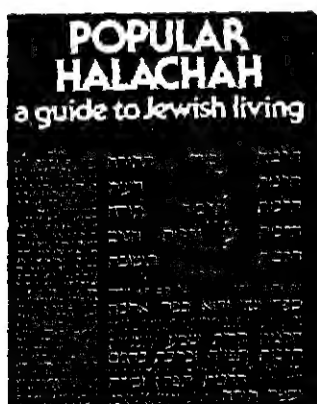
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GOP presidential hopefuls debut in N.H.

_____ **Noted separately** _____

5521 من الامم

Shelling, shooting break calm in Grozny after cease-fire

GROZNY, Russia (AP) — Small arms fire and sporadic shelling broke an uneasy calm in southern Grozny yesterday, the day after a temporary cease-fire expired in the breakaway republic of Chechnya.

The warring sides had accused each other of breaching the shaky truce, which began last Wednesday. Both Russian and Chechen officials were reportedly still trying to arrange another round of peace talks.

Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudayev repeated his call yesterday for talks with Russian President Boris Yeltsin, saying he never expected talks at the military level to succeed.

"Commanders are never able to solve problems," he told the

Estonian newspaper *Postimees*, the Interfax news agency reported. He said the war in Chechnya will "last for another 50 years."

Dudayev also denied earlier reports that his son Avtur was killed, saying he was only wounded and that his entire family now lives in the mountains.

As the cease-fire ran out, heavy explosions could be heard south of the shattered capital Sunday evening. Russian Interior Ministry troops with several armored vehicles had dug in overnight near the village of Samashki, west of Grozny.

"There were some firefights but it was nothing drastic — we answered their [Russian] fire," said Ramazan Jabilov, the 34-year-old commander of Chech-

nya's "Baysangur Unit," on his way out from southern Grozny.

Standing with a group of fighters on a stretch of empty road near the deserted village of Alkhan-Yurt, Jabilov said: "We have not received orders to shoot and neither have we orders not to shoot. We simply answer their fire."

A light round smacked into the dense woods swathed in mist behind him, startling a group of women refugees.

One of them, 45-year-old Tamara, explained they were on their way back after an unsuccessful attempt to see their apartments.

"They're firing at everything — it was too dangerous to go back," she said.

Serbia wants embargo lifted before talking peace

PETER BALE
BELGRADE

SERBIA has set a lifting of international sanctions as its price for considering the latest peace proposal on former Yugoslavia.

Official media yesterday said Foreign Minister Vladislav Jovanovic told Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev that easing sanctions was a precondition for Serbia's cooperation.

"Belgrade is categorical — first lifting of sanctions, and then everything else," the official Tanjug news agency said in a commentary on the weekend talks with Kozyrev.

Serbia has long looked to Russia as an ally in its battle with the United Nations over economic sanctions imposed for actively supporting the Serb side in the Bosnian civil war.

Kozyrev, who met Jovanovic and Serbian President Slobodan

Milosevic at an isolated hunting lodge, offered sympathy to ramp up Yugoslavia and said an easing of sanctions would help to reinforce an eight-week-old truce in Bosnia.

But leaders of Serb minorities in Bosnia and the Croatian breakaway region of Krajina yesterday showed their preparedness for war, setting up a top-level defense council to cement mutual aid agreements if attacked.

Bosnian Serbs and the Moslem-led government accused each other of using the cease-fire to regroup and reinforce their armies and of breaching the no-fly zone over Bosnia.

Fighting persisted around the UN-declared "safe area" of Bi-

hac where Bosnian government forces are surrounded by Bosnian and Krajina Serb forces allied to local rebel Moslems.

Krajina Serbs yesterday blocked a UN aid convoy reaching Bihać from Zagreb, apparently breaching an earlier agreement on aid to the area where people are said to face starvation after more than nine months under virtual siege.

Kozyrev met Milosevic against the background of a fresh initiative by the "contact group" — Russia, the United States, France, Germany and Britain — to draw Serbia into the peace process. A French-led initiative offers Belgrade relief from sanctions in return for recognizing

Bosnia and Croatia. Contact group diplomats are gathering in Belgrade to put the latest proposals to Milosevic.

In Sarajevo, UN military commander Lieutenant-General Rupert Smith maintained his diplomatic shuttle between Serbs and Moslems to keep the cease-fire on track, meeting Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic.

Sarajevo radio said Izetbegovic asked Smith to patrol the demilitarized zone around the eastern Moslem enclave of Srebrenica where he said Bosnian Serb forces were active.

The peace process has been given urgency by the decision of Croatian President Franjo Tudjman to expel UN peacekeepers from Croatia when their mandate expires at the end of March.

Reuter

Balladur suspends wiretapping amid storm over sting scandal

PARIS (AP) — Premier Edouard Balladur suspended emergency wiretapping procedures and a top police official resigned yesterday over a disputed sting operation that had political implications.

The storm was the latest to threaten the conservative premier's increasingly tenuous lead in France's presidential campaign, a lead that once seemed unassailable.

In a communique yesterday evening, Balladur decided "to suspend until further orders" the requests for wiretapping that require the prime minister's approval. It said officials would draw up "improvements in the existing procedure."

The order came shortly after a Balladur aide said the premier

was not informed of the intent of telephone surveillance he approved in December, in which police sought to monitor the father-in-law of an investigating judge.

The father-in-law allegedly sought a payoff to influence a probe into suspected illegal fundraising for Balladur's party, the Rally for the Republic.

The Balladur aide, speaking on anonymity, said the wiretapping request, signed by aides to Interior Minister Charles Pasqua and Telecommunications Minister Jose Rossi, failed to spell out precisely what the surveillance would be used for.

Pasqua cut short a pro-Balladur campaign trip in southern France to return to Paris yesterday afternoon.

Meanwhile, the director of judiciary police, Jacques Franquet, turned in his resignation, an Interior Ministry communique said yesterday evening.

Franquet wanted his office "to be sheltered from any controversy," the communique said.

Critics say the surveillance operation did not target the kind of suspected crime that allows wiretaps of private citizens. The procedure is normally used for national security reasons.

Socialist Party spokesman Jean Glavany said, "For a premier who repeats untruly that he is the first government to respect scrupulously the independence of the judiciary, once again we catch him lying red-handed."

De Klerk condemns 1982 bombing of ANC in London

CAPE TOWN (Reuter) — South African Deputy President F.W. de Klerk said yesterday that the 1982 government bombing of the London office of the African National Congress was "wrong and should not have been done."

De Klerk said he had never been a part of any decision by an apartheid government to commit a crime.

"I have never been part, in any meeting, of any decision to commit a crime," he told a news conference. "I have never been part of any decision which can be described as assassination or a wilful decision towards a crime."

"I distance myself from atrocities and from assassinations," said de Klerk, answering questions in the wake of claims in Britain's *Observer* newspaper on Sunday by former South African spy-master Craig Williamson that agents of the former white government blew up the ANC's London headquarters in

1982. Asked whether the 1982 bombing was a crime, de Klerk said: "In terms of British law, yes. In terms of South African law... I would say the office of an organization which is recognized by the government of the country in which that office is, I would say that that was wrong and should not have been done," de Klerk said.

Williamson told the *Observer* he helped to arrange the bombing and to send a parcel bomb to Mozambique, which in 1982 killed Ruth First, wife of South African Communist Party chief Joe Slovo, who died recently.

President Nelson Mandela said yesterday he had "taken note" of Williamson's allegations. Mandela said they undermined the fact that it was senior security force officials who had most strongly opposed the ANC government's plan for a truth commission to probe human rights abuses under apartheid.

The proposed truth commission will be empowered to investigate and pardon human rights violations and to grant compensation to victims.

De Klerk said he was comfortable with the principle of political responsibility for actions ordered by political chiefs.

"Having said that, there was a war on. We, as a government, were faced with a situation of more than one organization using military wings and undercover people to overthrow the state, which was in terms of the law a crime."

"Under such circumstances, cross-border operations against installations and bases of organizations doing the things that I have described were understandable and in terms of international law acceptable," he said.

De Klerk said, however, that he could not condone political assassination.

"There are rules to which one has to adhere also when you are at war."

On the streets of Angola's capital, beggars, squalor, garbage and amputees



A naked child begs for money in a rain storm in the middle of heavy traffic in Luanda, Angola. He is one of thousands of children who survive day to day by begging, stealing and searching for food in garbage heaps. (AP)

LUANDA, Angola (AP) — The little boy didn't have a pair of shoes, even a pocket.

Except for a thick mustache of green mucus, he was naked in the pouring rain, a pair of sad brown eyes and bent shoulders approaching cars asking wordlessly for money.

He accepted with surprise a folded note of 500,000 Angolan kwanzas — a princely sum for a Luandan street kid but about 30 US cents in the money markets — and vanished with a band of other children.

The streets they live on were once postcard pretty: pavements of hand-laid mosaic tile, palm-lined boulevards, pastel-painted colonial mansions looking out on an idyllic Atlantic Ocean bay.

But three decades of almost continuous war has turned Luanda, the capital of Angola, into a trash bin and open sewer — a place of sour air, dirty water, fetid apartments, sprawling slums, begging amputees, scheming police and rusting construction.

What passes for an economy is so topsy-turvy that a 20-cent newspaper costs more than a tank of state-subsidized gasoline, which can be had for 12 cents. The \$150 needed for a bed for the night in a top hotel is more than a teacher could earn in two years.

Street children were rare in Luanda a few years ago, said Dr. Mary Daly, a public health physician.

Now, the UN Children's Fund

estimates some 7,000 orphaned or abandoned children are living by their wits on the streets. Passers-by barely glance at youngsters who roam, beg or sleep huddled in doorways beneath dirty, tattered blankets.

"The legacy of this war will be the amputees and street children. Many of these people are never going back. They are going to be destitute here forever," said Mike McDonagh, director of Angolan operations for the humanitarian organization Concern.

Luandans complain constantly about rising crime, and even the dead are not safe.

At funerals, it has become practice for a family friend to chip an expensive earring with a pick just before it is buried, ensuring the coffin will not be dug up by thieves to resell, sans corpse.

There are hopes a new peace treaty will end the fighting between the government and the rebels of UNITA, the National Union for the Total Liberation of Angola. But previous accords have failed since their war began when Portugal gave Angola independence in 1975.

Swollen by refugees, Luanda — a city designed for 500,000 people — now is home to 3 million.

Rapid urbanization is rising throughout the Third World, but it is especially acute in Angola, where the fighting between the formerly Marxist government and UNITA has made life in the countryside perilous.

Outside the cities, civilians must scrounge for food on land seeded thick with land mines while avoiding roaming bandits and press gangs looking for recruits for the warring sides.

Of the more than 100,000 Angolans killed in the past two years of fighting, more than half have been civilians — innocent victims caught in crossfire or under bomb-sights as the rival armies turned town after town into battlefields.

In a recent public health cam-

paign involving 6,000 house visits, 25 percent of families had diarrhea.

Daly said her organization, Development Workshop, has been tracking growth rates of children and finds 60 percent of youngsters age 1 to 4 are below the minimum weight expected for their age.

"Three years ago we would never have seen something like that," she said. "Things are getting worse and they will not get immediately better."

Egyptian police block protest over union elections

CAIRO (AP) — Police poured into the streets yesterday to block a march by professionals to protest government interference in union elections. Four people were beaten and one was arrested.

Doctors, engineers, lawyers and others planned to gather at the Doctors' Syndicate in downtown Cairo and then march to Abdeen Palace, a presidential office. They expected 5,000 to participate.

But police surrounded the headquarters, beating the union members and harassing others. Union leaders called off the march to avert more violence and urged people to disperse over loudspeakers.

More than half of the professional unions are controlled by the Moslem Brotherhood, Egypt's largest fundamentalist organization.

The government has accused the brotherhood of aiding Islamic radicals.

Remaining Jewish stolen treasure found in Hungary

BUCHAREST (AP) — Police have recovered the final missing pieces of a \$200 million Jewish artifact collection stolen in Hungary in 1993.

Thirty gold and silver pieces worth \$4.5 million were found late last week, police spokesman Lt.-Col. Nicolae Budur said. His statement gave no further details.

The objects were stolen from the Budapest Jewish museum in December 1993. The theft represented a large portion of one of the most extensive and precious Jewish collections in central Europe.

Moslem militants in Pakistan threaten war on Christians

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP) — Moslem militants blocked traffic outside a courthouse yesterday and threatened to declare war on Pakistan Christians if a boy sentenced to hang for insulting Islam wins his appeal.

Police in riot gear swarmed over the Lahore High Court building, blocking passage of about 500 extremists.

Salamat Masih, 14, and his uncle, Rehmat Masih, 40, have appealed their conviction of writing anti-Islamic slogans on a mosque wall, a crime that carries a mandatory death sentence.

"If they are freed their lives in this country would never be safe," Defense Attorney Hina Jilani told The Associated Press.

At the appeal hearing, Jilani has argued that the state has failed to give any evidence that her clients blasphemed against Islam.

The offending slogans were immediately wiped off the mosque and witnesses have refused to repeat them in court saying they are too offensive.

Even the Moslem cleric, Maulana Fazle Haq, who laid the charge has withdrawn his complaint, said Jilani.

"There's no evidence. The state hasn't presented anything, nothing," she said.

A charge of contempt of court against Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto for expressing shock at the death sentence was dropped yesterday, said Jilani.

Bhutto has promised to crack down on Moslem extremists, but this case has shown how weak her government is against a relatively small, but vocal group of militants.

Outside the court the mob chanted "death to Bhutto" and threatened violence against the judges and the lawyers. Salamat, who was only 12 years old when the alleged offense occurred, has already spent a year in jail because successive judges, fearing for their safety, refused to let him out on bail.

Wearing headbands that read "kill them or die trying," the mob built a stone barricade across the road forcing traffic to detour.

"If the court lets them go we will come out on the street and fight the Christians," screamed one of the organizers of the protest, Alla Dita Mujahid, secretary of Jamaat-e-ahle-Sunnat, a fundamentalist group.



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NPT versus anthrax

THE most disturbing aspect of Egypt's intensive campaign against Israel's not signing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is that it has struck a sympathetic note in Washington. For reasons not immediately apparent, the administration attaches great importance to the renewal of the treaty by its 170 signatories in April. And the State Department seems to believe that if a unilateral Israeli "gesture" is needed to induce the Cairo regime and other Arab states to sign the treaty, Israel should make it.

But it is difficult to understand why Washington should consider signatures of dictatorships reassuring. Whether or not regimes like North Korea, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Syria, and even Egypt sign the Treaty will hardly serve the NPT's aim of removing the threat of nuclear war. As in the case of Iraq, a veteran signatory, neither a solemn pledge nor international inspection can prevent a determined dictator from developing non-conventional capabilities, including nuclear weapons.

Happily, there are those in the administration and Congress who object to applying similar standards to democracies and police states. They believe that only democracies - where representative governments, reflecting the will of the people, oppose war - should be trusted with nuclear weapons. Aggression-prone tyrannies, on the other hand, should be actively prevented from developing them.

That Israel must have the option of nuclear deterrence is self-evident. It is a tiny country surrounded by armed-to-the-teeth neighbors that outnumber it by more than 50 to one, and it is being threatened with annihilation by at least some of them. Foreign Minister Shimon Peres often mentions Iraq and Iran as the most obvious threats, but he has also warned against the danger from Syria if Hafez Assad's regime is replaced. Less sanguine observers maintain that Assad himself has not relinquished the war option. And Muammar Gaddafi's Libya, too, must be reckoned with in the non-conventional arms race.

Even if these regimes failed to develop a non-conventional capability, Israel would have had to develop a nuclear potential as an insurance policy against being overrun. But now that such capabilities have become part of the arsenal of virtually all of Israel's neighbors except Jordan, and that the development of nuclear weapons in Iran and perhaps Iraq is imminent, the need for an Israeli deterrence option is more pertinent than ever.

If nothing else, the news of Iraq's biological weapons development should make this clear. Columnist William Safire of the *New York Times* reported last Thursday that the constant and exacting search for weapons of mass

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destruction by UN inspectors has only managed to limit the development of nuclear weapons and poison gas in Saddam Hussein's Iraq. They have been useless against the production of deadly micro-organisms for biological warfare.

Hundreds of biologists are employed in the project, headed by Dr. Ribab Taha, known to Iraqis as "Dr. Germ." According to Ambassador Rolf Ekeus of Sweden, who heads the UN inspection team, the Iraqis' stories change every night. "They admit only what we can prove," he told Safire. Iraq's "germs of choice" are anthrax spores, which resist reentry heat and can be used in missile warheads. And while Iraq claims that the program is peaceful, aimed purely to protect against disease, the UN report of two months ago concluded that "the indications all point to an offensive program."

This has been confirmed by General Wafiq Samarra'i, a former head of Iraqi military intelligence and the most senior Iraqi presidential aide to defect. In an article published in *The Sunday Times* in London, he says that, "Saddam deceived UN inspectors monitoring his weapons program in the aftermath of the Gulf War." According to Samarra'i, 200 anthrax bombs as well as 80 Scuds and improved 'Al Hussein' Scuds had been buried around the Salah-a-Din region of Iraq, near Saddam's home town of Tikrit.

The general, who says he saw documentary proof of secret weapons only months before he defected, also told the *Sunday Times* Saddam still possesses at least 10 mobile Scud launchers. "The Iraqis have devised a method to avoid detection by spy satellites, constantly moving them from one agricultural building to another," he said. According to the newspaper, the general "has even suggested that there may be a second 'supergun' capable of firing anthrax shells hundreds of miles."

No country since WW II has been subjected to the kind of thorough scrutiny with which the UN inspectors have examined Iraq. Last year these inspectors were certain every last Scud missile and launcher had been destroyed. They were wrong. Once they leave and the international sanctions on Iraq - already compromised - are lifted, Iraq will be able to develop every known weapon of mass destruction.

That Saddam is ready and willing to use such weapons is not in doubt: in the 1980s he used poison gas to kill 5,000 Kurdish villagers in Halabja. In fact, the Egyptians, too, have used poison gas, in the 1966 war against Yemen.

Israel cannot permit itself to be deprived of a deterrent under these circumstances, and it must treat Egyptian efforts to prevent it from possessing this option as hostile, belligerent, and dangerous.



A document of denial

FOUR days before the Declaration of Principles was signed in 1993, Yasser Arafat wrote to Prime Minister Rabin rejecting those articles in the Palestinian Covenant "which are inconsistent" with the new PLO position toward Israel. He undertook "to submit to the Palestinian National Council for formal approval the necessary changes" in the covenant.

Rabin and the Israeli people are still waiting for those changes. And it doesn't look as if the PLO executive committee meeting in Cairo today has any intention of discussing them.

The problem of the covenant doesn't principally lie in those clauses that directly deny Israel's right to exist - even though this denial is firmly juxtaposed to the imperative for "the liberation of Palestine," which appears in no less than 18 of the covenant's 33 articles. A convincing amendment of the covenant would require its virtual abandonment by the PLO, which adopted it three decades ago.

The essential problem is the "national question" - both Palestinian and Jewish - around which the PLO position toward Israel revolves, and which reflects the PLO's attitude to the character of the parties to the conflict.

Article 1 affirms the existence of the "Arab Palestinian people ... an integral part of the Arab nation." The existence of a Palestinian identity is, according to Article 4, "genuine and essential."

Articles 5 and 6 together equate the Jews as Palestinians through the instrumentality of Arab identity. This thrust in Palestinian ideology to Arabize Jews who lived in Palestine or elsewhere in the Middle East provides the PLO Covenant with its first denial of Jewish peoplehood.

MORDECHAI NISAN

If the PLO really wants peace, it ought to tear up its covenant

gious community revokes any claim they might make in the name of national self-determination. The article continues by affirming that the Jews do not "constitute a single nation with an identity of its own."

IT SHOULD now be clear why calling upon the PLO to amend those articles of its covenant that only deny Israel's political existence is unrealistic, certainly inadequate.

The Jewish people, just a drop short of 4,000 years of its national saga, soon to celebrate the rule of King David and his Israelite kingdom in Jerusalem 3,000 years ago, hardly requires the historical sanction of the PLO.

But the PLO's rewriting of history is, beyond the travesty of justice involved, also an awesome political obstacle to reconciliation with the modern state of Israel.

Without resolving this "national question," the PLO can have no more magnanimous intent than to grant the "Zionist invaders" now ensconced in their "racist" but transitional state (Article 22) the privilege of being an autonomous religious community in a future liberated Palestine. On this point, the PLO and Hamas are in total agreement.

The "national question" embedded in the Palestinian Covenant, constitutes the core of the PLO's essential rejection of Israel. In the Declaration of Principles, the PLO, one party to the accord, is recognized as "representing the Palestinian people." The other party, "the government of the State of Israel," does not, according to the PLO Covenant, represent anything or anybody beyond "Zionist aggression" (Article 15), expansionism, colonialism and fascism (Article 22).

Recognizing the PLO's distortions of Jewish identity is a precondition to introducing any meaningful clarifications or amendments of its covenant.

The writer is senior lecturer in Middle East Studies at the Hebrew University's Rothberg School for Overseas Students.

Road hogs

LAWRENCE RIFKIN

THE other day I watched an Egghead driver maneuver around a bus which had stalled on a narrow section of road. An iron railing lining the curb on the opposite side left little room to spare, and I marveled at the driver's ability to handle his long, multi-ton vehicle with such confidence and finesse.

A true professional, I thought - before he raced a yellow light into the next intersection and crossed on red.

We see them everywhere. There are the speed demons, who routinely exceed the limits by huge margins, and the weavers, who ignore the solid lines. Then you get the highbeam dazzlers, who blind you at night, and the lanehogs who refuse to pull over for merging traffic.

There are drivers who don't believe in looking in their mirrors or signaling before a turn, and traffic-light racers for whom yellow means hurry up - even when the only result is gridlock two meters into the intersection.

In short: Israeli drivers. It's bad enough when the offender is some Mario Andretti wannabe in a BMW - a car, by the way, which seems to come equipped with its very own set of traffic laws. But it's absolutely infuriating when the offender is a professional driver.

WEBSTER'S Dictionary defines "professional" as a "person who makes a business of an occupa-

Watch out for the professional drivers, those 'experts' who place others' lives in jeopardy

tion, practice, etc." and as "an expert" - like that Egghead driver who so skillfully circled around the stalled bus and then reentered the next intersection without incident.

Or the driver of the phosphate rig heading for Ashdod harbor and a new land-speed record.

Or the taxi driver who cut across three lanes without signaling in order to pick up a fare.

Or the bus driver who pulled away from the curb without bothering to look in his mirror, feeling safe in the knowledge that most drivers wouldn't relish the thought of being dragged to the next stop in a cramped sedan and so would give way.

(I'm not even going to bring up the police commissioner's driver who was recently spotted committing six traffic violations, including speeding and failing to signal turns, while driving his boss two kilometers to the Knesset.)

Why do so many people who spend their working day behind the wheel understand "professional" only within the context of earning a living, or as an indicator of expertise - getting in and out of tight spots, for instance, understanding engine compression ratios, or downshifting without sounding like a 747 in a belly landing?

How about some expertise in preventing accidents? Or some simple road courtesy?

I know that many professional drivers abide by the law. But I've lost count of the times I've felt like rolling down my window to tell one that he drives like my neighbor's teenage son.

There have even been times I've felt like stopping a driving instructor and telling him that he was probably the one who taught my neighbor's teenage son.

There is no question that the traffic police should pull over every lawbreaker, and issue stiff fines or summonses for immediate trial.

But they should pay special attention to professional drivers - because they are the ones who ought to be setting an example to the rest of us.

And if these professionals should cry that harsh fines or suspended licenses would take the food off their families' tables, the judges can remind them of those whom they placed at risk of losing their livelihoods, but their lives. If the professionals don't like it, they should be told to find another profession.

After a second offense, they should be made to.

The writer is a Jerusalem-based freelancer.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

B'TSELEM

Sir, - The pretext for Steven Plaut's article ("Strange kind of morality," February 8) was a letter I had written that appeared in the Hebrew press dealing with the newspaper coverage following the murder of Ofra Felix by terrorists.

Newspaper reports had described her as a good friend of Tzipora Porat, "who was killed in the attack at Beta." As a former journalist who knows the details of the tragic event that occurred at Beta on April 6, 1988 (and not in 1991, as Plaut wrote), I wanted to correct that misrepresentation. The facts, well-publicized as the time, were that Tzipora Porat was not killed in an attack, but that she was shot in the head by an errant bullet from the weapon fired by the guard accompanying the group.

The former Chief Military Prosecutor, Amnon Shashnow, wrote about the incident in his book *Justice under Fire* (p. 112): "Proper planning and coordination of the hike would have prevented the incident and its tragic consequences."

BRAINWASHING

Sir, - After a lyrical description of Talal of Jenin watching the "countryside which unfolded between two buildings" in the promised land across the "Green Line," into which he cannot come because of the closure, Jon Immanuel (Closure tops Palestinians' list of grievances), February 7 tells us: "Samir... says in Jenin... there is a direct connection between the closure and the high proportion of people who support suicide attacks against Israelis... there is little Hamas or Islamic Jihad influence, but Fatah members support what happened at Beit Lid. I feel that."

How much longer will we be subject to this ill-intended brainwashing? Is the closure the cause for a hundred and more years of Jew-killing by the Arabs? Was the closure the reason for the slaying, over two years ago, of Motti Biniton, who entered a shop in Jenin to buy some jars for pickling olives? Like so

Negligence in operating the weapon, carelessness, and reckless firing were also crucial factors." There are, tragically, enough innocent Israeli victims of terror attacks without confabulating new ones.

Plaut contends that B'Tselem relates to the human rights of Palestinians in one manner and those of settlers in another. Even a rudimentary check of B'Tselem publications indicates that he is confusing facts with his prejudices. In its press releases and reports since the spring of 1994, B'Tselem has condemned human rights violations committed by the authorities against settlers. In two recent reports, for example, B'Tselem criticized the ban of Kahanah Chai and the violation of the human rights of alleged Jewish "underground" detainees, among them Lt. Oren Edri.

Mr. Plaut's evident dislike of B'Tselem does not free him of his obligations to truth and accuracy.

YITZHAR BE'ER
Executive Director, B'Tselem Jerusalem.

RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

Sir, - In response to Eliezer Whaitman's letter of February 8 about religious pluralism, I, as a long-time member of AACI, would surely withdraw my membership were AACI to take a stand on recognizing Conservative and Reform "rabbi." Such a stand, to my mind, is contrary to the "principles that Judaism stands for."

That groups want to believe and act differently from the accepted traditional Jewish way is their right. Let them give themselves a different name. I could no sooner recognize a Reform "rabbi" as a religious authority than I would recognize someone who called himself "doctor" although he had not prepared himself by learning the traditional curriculum.

AACI was not established to become involved in these controversies.

L. BEAME
Jerusalem.

ROCK HISTORY

Sir, - In *Time Out* of February 10, the lead article by Kayo Green displays a disheartening confusion about rock's mid-life background (the '60s). Green alleges that Jesus Christ Superstar as "the first official rock opera" (what makes it official?) and "the first time leitmotifs were successfully wedded to rock - and told a riveting story to boot."

Everyone knows that Tommy, by the Who, is widely recognized as the first rock opera. Tommy came out in 1969. Moreover, Webber and Rice warmed up for the *Jesus Christ Superstar* by collaborating on the '50s-style *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. My original copy of *Joseph* does not carry a copyright date, so I do not know whether it preceded Tommy.

As the years go by, I find more and more similar instances of ignorance of our musical roots, as the people around me get younger and younger.

JONATHAN PLUTCHOK
Ra'anana.

Reality behind the image

GABRIEL Ben-Dor's article "Next in line for terror" (*The Jerusalem Post*, February 1), was an odd blend of misconceptions, contradictions, half-truths, spurious conclusions, and outright falsehoods.

The writer claims that "Islamic terrorism in Israel, as elsewhere, is the product of poverty, backwardness and ignorance." This is simply nonsense.

Islamic fundamentalism (a more accurate term is Islamic revival) is not a product or by-product of poverty. Several studies have shown that a substantial majority of Islamists and their supporters come from the middle and upper socio-economic strata.

In the Jordanian parliamentary elections of 1994, to cite just one example, the Moslem Brothers won by landslide margins in such middle-class Amman districts as Jabal Amman and Shmashani, as they did in the poorer neighborhoods. Likewise, in the West Bank and the rest of the occupied territories, the Islamist movement has attained much more popularity and acceptance in towns like Hebron, Nablus, and Ramallah than it has in rural areas and refugee camps, which have a lower standard of living.

Moreover, successive student council elections in West Bank colleges and universities have consistently shown that city dwellers are more likely to vote for "Islamic blocs" than are villagers. The fact that city dwellers, who are generally more educated and better off economically, have consistently lent more support to Islamists refutes the widely held assumption that Islamist popularity thrives on economic misery.

KHALID M. AMAYREH

MORE TO the point, the article is manifestly erroneous in alleging that fundamentalism thrives on ignorance.

Again, empirical studies have shown that Islamists enjoy better-than-average educational levels than non-Islamists. It is an established fact that wherever union elections are allowed in the Arab world, Islamists often emerge the winners.

Furthermore, a recent study on Hamas pointed out that "Islamist students have a disproportionately higher representation in engineering and natural science colleges," which can hardly be considered "hotbeds of ignorance and backwardness."

A majority of Islamic fundamentalists are well-educated and middle or upper class

lished fact that wherever union elections are allowed in the Arab world, Islamists often emerge the winners.

Furthermore, a recent study on Hamas pointed out that "Islamist students have a disproportionately higher representation in engineering and natural science colleges," which can hardly be considered "hotbeds of ignorance and backwardness."

Last year, the student who scored the highest marks (a cumulative average of 98.5 percent) in the secondary matriculation exam (the Palestinian equivalent of the baccarat) was an Islamist who had been arrested several times for pro-Hamas sympathies.

As for the question of modernity, the writer seems to have fallen, probably inadvertently, into the trap of confusing modernization, an indispensable prerequisite for development and progress, and Westernization, a controversial socio-cultural value that is generally rejected by Moslem societies.

The truth of the matter is that

Islamic fundamentalists, like their Christian and Jewish counterparts, do not reject modern technology, but rather feel genuinely threatened by such negative aspects of Western civilization as the dismemberment of the family, rampant materialism and consumerism, permissive life-styles, premarital sex and teenage pregnancy, and drug addiction. Needless to say, these indisputable evils are hardly favorite Christian or Jewish values that ought to be defended.

Finally, in analyzing the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East, the writer utterly fails to cite the main factor contributing to the Islamist phenomenon: popular disenchantment with the despotic secular or pseudo-religious regimes that have governed and continue to govern the Arab-Moslem masses from the Persian Gulf to the Atlantic Ocean.

The writer is a Palestinian journalist.

POSTSCRIPTS

THIRTY YEARS ago, a lawyer with an eye for opportunity approached a little old lady, aged 90, and offered to pay her \$500 a month for the right to own her cottage when she died. It seemed like a good risk.

The little old lady was Jeanne Calment, who celebrates her 120th birthday today.

The lawyer, Andre Francois Raffray, 77, has paid out \$180,000 - three times the value of Calment's house.

You shouldn't have wished her *ad mea v'carin* when you swung the deal, Andre.

Tom O'Dwyer

1501 מן הארץ

Israeli films get a boost at Berlin fest

ISRAEL was "in" at this year's Berlin Film Festival, which ended yesterday. The seven Israeli entries were showcased in a well-attended, critically praised section of the Panorama category.

"It wasn't planned that way," says Panorama chief Wieland Speck, "but when we were selecting the films we found so many interesting ones from Israel that we put together a little sidebar."

Success also could be measured in other, less direct ways. Lia Van Leer, Jerusalem's movie doyenne, was president of the international jury. In addition, Israeli producers displayed

an increasingly sophisticated sense of marketing.

Last — and probably least — Ronit Alkabez, the star of *Sh'hur*, won a fleeting moment of celebrity with her outrageous outfits.

Song of the Sirens, *On the Edge*, *Electric Blanket*, *Coffee with Lemon* and *Aya*, an imaginative autobiography were among the entries, with most screenings filled to capacity.

Coffee with Lemon, about the trials of Russian immigrants, and *Song of the Sirens*, a hip look at Tel Aviv during the Gulf war, were favorites.

Assi Dayan's *Electric Blanket* also drew a large audience, as Dayan is known to German audiences after the successful local run and TV broadcast of his previous film, *Life According to Agfa*.

Sh'hur, Israel's nominee in the

MINI HALBERSTAM
BERLIN

Panorama competition, was enthusiastically received by the critics. "A family drama of enormous dimensions," was one reviewer's comment.

Audiences were moved by the sensitive portrayal of family relationships and the look at traditional values.

Producers were generally pleased with the results. *Song of the Sirens* was picked up by a North American distributor and will probably have a limited theatrical release there. A German distributor also showed strong interest.

Flying Camel is being seriously considered for acquisition by a major German TV channel and there are intense negotiations with a large German distributor

over *Sh'hur*.

The overall success of *Sh'hur* can also be ascribed to the increasingly professional presentation that producers have learned is part of the international film business.

More serious films, such as *Aya* and *On the Edge*, were a more difficult sell. "German [state] TV is now looking for lighter movies in order to compete with the commercial and ca-

ble stations," explained Madeleine Ali-Elancry of Transfax Films.

Israel even did well in the unofficial category of party-giving. Its official party, thrown at a luxury hotel, rivaled that of more experienced delegations, despite the somewhat provincial folk music played in the background.

Local TV crews flocked around Alkabez, who was decked out in her usual attention-getting style.

The focus on Israel was so successful, that the Montreal Film Festival later this year will have a special section entitled "Israeli Cinema of Today."

Realism and romance

FOR a preview of the Grammy Awards, to be held on March 1, check out 1995 Grammy Nominees (NMC), a snappy collection of what the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences recognizes as the pick of 1994's crop.

This album contains 13 tracks representing all but one of the finalists in the categories of Record of the Year, Best Male Vocal Performance and Best Female Pop Vocal Performance.

The one missing song — "The Most Beautiful Girl in the World" — is by the former Prince, now known as Symbol, who definitely takes the prize for this year's Least Cooperative Recording Artist. His mysterious name change is apparently a ruse by which to get out of most of his contractual obligations to Warner Brothers. So perhaps he also deserves the prize for Anarchist of the Year.

Hearing this lot of finalists, one is struck by how many of the songs mirror the reality of, for example, AIDS, wives who walk out and baby-boomers looking up at the hole in the ozone layer. Though sentimentalism is far from dead, it often comes with a nitty-gritty twist.

In the Record of the Year category, Boyz II Men's "I'll Make Love to You" from *II* definitely deserves to be filed under "icky." But even this bunch of homely romantics on bended knee have come to terms with realism. If you listen carefully, you'll notice that the song sounds like self-control instructions from a sex manual.

Mary Chapin Carpenter's *Come On Come On* has not, to the best of my knowledge, been released in Israel. So I don't know about the album. But the single, "He Thinks He'll Keep

NEW RELEASES
TIRZAH AGASSI

Her" is great. A take-off on a Geritol tonic ad in which a perky housewife combats iron-poor blood and is rewarded with her doting spouse's sound bite "My wife, I think I'll keep her," it turns the tables, telling the story of a perfect wife who walks out. Its biting country rock is unstoppable as it describes the souring of the American dream. Yet its observations are so freshly stated that they offer an antidote with their example.

Sheryl Crow's *Tuesday Night Music Club* is represented by the single "All I Wanna Do" with its hook of "All I wanna do is have some fun. I've got a feelin' I'm not the only one." Crow is also up for Best Female Vocalist. It should be noted that the album offers much more depth than the single, as it delivers a diverse and richly textured, cross-generational view of the effort to love. Crow has a brilliant way of combining quirkily insightful verses with unforgettable hooks. She deserves at least one award.

Bonnie Raitt's *Longing in the Heart* is a weaker album. Like Crow, she is also up for Best Female Vocalist. But even in the two selections here — the good-humored "Love Sneakin' Up On You" and the somewhat foreboding "Longing in Their Hearts" — her role of baby-boom representative wears a trifle thin.

The fifth Record of the Year nominee, the Soundtrack to the film *Philadelphia* is also uneven. Bruce Springsteen's "Streets of Philadelphia," which represents it here, is however a finely produced and overwhelmingly compassionate piece which really says

something about AIDS. But surely the Oscar it won is prize enough.

Seal's "Prayer for the Dying" is the only nominee for the Best Male Vocal Performance which, in reaching out to every loser on the planet through a musical wash of true concern, avoids the "boy-girl" theme. The man deserves to win. But matinee idol Michael Bolton, or an Elton John well past his prime, may still beat him. Then again, perhaps Luther Vandross's gospel-rich "Love The One You're With" will take the cake.

Only one nominee for Best Female Pop Vocal Performance deals with male-female romance. But Celine Dion's "The Power of Love" does just that in a big way. Dion's remarkable voice pumps fresh blood into the dream of true love. The French Canadian singer speaks such poor English that she had to learn the song phonetically. Nonetheless its utter overstatement works. Perhaps it's the sheer dynamics of Dion's voice that makes her more convincing than Mariab Carey who, in "Hero," makes the reasonable discovery that the hero that one seeks dwells within one's very own self.

Perhaps Barbra Streisand's "Ordinary Miracles" is a fitting last word for the zeitgeist of the moment. She realistically points out that it's the things we take for granted that really count. Say what you will about the dirty politics of pop-music industry awards, but a good number of people out there are doing their best to provide a not too optimistic world with some rays of hope. It is odd to be touched by an album as glibly commercial as this one. It's even heartwarming. I'm certainly going to tune in to see who wins.



Seal deserves a Grammy, but matinee idol Michael Bolton, shown here, may still win. (AFP)

Butterflies take wing

DANCE REVIEW
DORA SOWDEN

IT'S not often that choreographers and dancers cooperate like Sharon Karpel and Ronit Feingold did at Habima Theater in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, on February 18. They took part as dancers in each other's work. With two other dancers they presented a program of three works under the title *Songdance*.

The music varied from Japanese traditional to rhythmic noise.

In Feingold's "Song Dance," four dancers swung about, stepped around and lay down. Karpel contributed two works that aimed at levels beyond the capacities of human bodies — falling, bending and lying flat with legs in the air. Her three dancers — Rinat Nevo, Tsilla Krakover and Feingold sat on their heels and haunches or folded themselves up like Moslems at prayer in "Butterflies are Flowers that Blossom on Trees." Nevo danced a solo called "Dreams are Flowers that Blossom in the Heart."

OVER and above the sterling merit of the program of seven works by seven choreographers and a host of dancers, the winter workshop of Bat-Dor studios at the Bat-Dor Theater in Tel Aviv (February 12) had a message: modern dance is changing — for the better. Though there were no "stories," every work had a theme. Nothing attempted to be totally abstract. The accent was on group dance rather than solos and the ensembles in each work were notable. The dancers were students, the choreographers experienced.

Ruth Forberg's "Almost Black" was a finely coordinated "time out" for 12 dancers. "Prayer" by Rudi Schaafsma (music by Bach), also for 12 dancers, was sometimes reminiscent of Alvin Ailey but had its own dignity. "Ghost, Wind and Spirit" by Ania Brud combined grace with modern style. Quite outstanding was Ilana Kalef's "And Should You Find," inspired by a Bialik poem.

Yet the spell of romantic charm and modern dynamics was best seen in "Women Song" (music by Handel) by the American choreographer Kliff Keuter from the repertoire of the Bat-Dor company reconstructed by Elizabeth Glibat and arranged by Jeannette Ordman. "When the Streets have No Name" by Tamara Giza sought to project the struggle to survive.

ON THE tiny Pargod stage in Jerusalem (February 9) dancer Sylvia Barro and guitarist-singer Rafael Grau, both from Argentina, demonstrated, in their flamenco performance, how two artists with exceptional skills can make do with whatever space is available. Barro's "Zapateado" and "Duende" and Grau's traditional guitar and open-throated voice made the occasion special.

War drama a touch too tenuous

THEATER REVIEW
NAOMI DOUDAI

TOUCH WOOD

A monodrama by Shmuel Calderon. Direction, Ruth Dyches. Hebrew title, *Touch Wood*. At Tzavta 2, Tel Aviv. Shmuel Calderon in a one-man performance.

SINCE the inception at Suzanne Dellal of the TheaterNetto annual festival, with its many solo performances, the one-man show has grown into a proliferating, popular local genre.

In this production, Shmuel Calderon, an actor currently appearing in the Tzavta version of A.B. Yehoshua's *Terminal Therapy*, puts on record his own life story as it has touched upon that of the fictive character he portrays in the play.

In the latter, first mounted on the eve of the Yom Kippur War in October 1973, Calderon played a soldier by the name of Jonathan. Three days later, as he recounts in *Touch Wood*, he finds himself fighting side by side with another Jonathan in Sinai.

This one, the doppelgänger of the character in the drama, becomes his guardian angel. Witnessing his baptism under fire, he inspires the raw recruit with his own brand of tried courage.

When Shmuel ultimately returns from the war to play the fictive Jonathan on stage, the real Jonathan is blinded in another battle.

The intervening years are depicted here in 40 short retrospective episodes. They are fraught with painful memories and bitter-sweet nostalgia.

Calderon, a lively storyteller, recalls the Sturm und Drang of the battlefield with the excitement typical of old soldiers recounting the drama of their "glorious" past.

If in need of serious clipping, his recital is more than the usual inflated and inflated souvenir or "chizbar" of the war-scarred veteran. At times the telling rings so true it holds the spectator trapped for a few fear-spiked moments inside the skin of a fighting man.

As against this, the narrative is too loose, the tempo too slack, the tone too benign to convey the drama with conviction.

Beethoven benefits from discipline and swing

THE Dresden Philharmonic represents some of the best there is in the Central European orchestral tradition.

Its sounds may perhaps be not quite as glamorous and brilliant as that of several American orchestras but it emphasizes more intrinsic values: tempi that carry the force of conviction — except for a somewhat too impatient opening of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony — significant distribution of energies, carefully planned dynamics and the placing of accents where they naturally belong.

A tendency of these well-rehearsed German musicians toward somewhat too stolid and disciplined playing was counteracted by French conductor Michel Plasson, who injected just the right amount of energy, swing and wholesome elasticity.

What all this amounted to was a forceful, altogether satisfying rendition of the Seventh, following a still somewhat loosely-knit "Leonore" Overture No. 3.

Pianist Francois Rene Duchable played Beethoven's "Emperor" Concerto with clarity, loving care in the shaping of phrases, a well-developed sense of drama as well as of melody, and delicacy of expression in the work's calm, lyrical passages.

The gradual transition from the restrained, quiet ending of the slow movement to the sudden, explosive start of the final one achieved the climax that one always hopes for but so rarely gets.

Jerusalem Theater, February 18.

Ury Eppstein

RICHARD Strauss's "Death and Transfiguration" (1890) had its first performance in Israel. Besides its wistful nostalgia and tempestuous moods, one may marvel at the 26-year-old composer's mastery of orchestral coloring. The rendition by the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, in its subscription concert No. 5, conducted by David Shalton, was thoroughly romantic, and realized the constantly changing instrumental colors to good effect.

Compared with Brahms's Violin Concerto, the program's main work, it was almost conventional.

Violinist Frank Peter Zimmermann from Germany brought fresh air, temperamental drive and liveliness to Brahms's sometimes too stately sounding violin concerto. This did not prevent this soloist, however, from celebrating the work's melodious passages — not only in the slow

CONCERT ROUNDUP

movement but also in the lyrical episodes of the first one.

An "Allemande" by Isaye as an encore was particularly captivating.

The second fully orchestrated version of "Building the King's Stages" (1957) by Ben-Zion Orgad gave this incidental theater music the dimensions of a fully-fledged symphonic movement.

Jerusalem Theater, February 16.

Ury Eppstein

IT takes some daring, a lot of knowledge and a capacity for formulation to present a personality as fascinating and multifaceted as Olivier Messiaen to an audience in a single session. Tomer Lev made this courageous attempt, as pianist, lecturer and program editor, contributing significantly to his listeners' artistic appreciation and intellectual apprehension of this elusive subject, in the last concert of a series on music in Paris 1895-1945.

The unique phenomenon Messiaen was put into historical perspective as a synthesis that evolved out of the preceding thesis of Debussy's Impressionism and the ensuing antithesis of the

Group of Six's Aggression. Messiaen's all-encompassing spiritual approach to nature, religious belief, the cosmos and the metaphysical concepts underlying his music were interpreted as different, though not necessarily contradictory, aspects of this versatile personality.

The program was selected to illustrate some of these various aspects. *Louange a l'Eternite de Jesus* for cello and piano (Hillel Zori and Tomer Lev) conveyed the composer's idea of eternity through its extremely slow tempo and long, drawn-out notes.

Two of the twenty *Regards sur l'Enfant Jesus* for piano (Tomer Lev) contrasted an almost ethereal, spiritual calm with the elemental energies attributed to the prophets. *Le Merle Bleu* from the "Birds" Catalog depicted Messiaen's way of portraying a bird as an integral part of its surrounding nature. *Visions de l'Amen*, intensely and powerfully rendered on the two pianos by Michal Tal and Naomi Lev, brought the evening to a well-nigh overwhelming conclusion.

Emmanuel Halperin's sensitive and carefully phrased readings of the relevant literary pieces by Messiaen and some contemporaries in French and Hebrew

were artistic miniatures in their own right.

The lecture, enlightening and erudite as it was, could have been condensed. Unfortunately the evening's verbal part outweighed its musical one.

Jerusalem Music Center, Mishkenot Sha'ananim, February 14.

Ury Eppstein

SWISS conductor Karl Anton Rickenbacher led the Beersheba Sinfonietta in performances inspired by images of nature. Beethoven's "Pastoral" Symphony was warm and deeply musical.

Summer Night for Strings — a post-Romantic score recalling Schoenberg's *Transfigured Night* — by Othmar Schoeck (1886-1957) was read with attention to detail as well as an emotional atmosphere befitting one of the most important Swiss composers of the 20th century.

The evening's soloist, 25-year-old Austrian pianist Till Fellner, breezed through Mozart's Piano Concerto no. 19 (K.459) with a taut ease that bordered on stylistic brilliance.

Beersheba Conservatory February 18.

Max Siera

The show goes on for Haifa Children's Festival

NOTHING, but nothing, has been cut from the Haifa Children's Theater Festival "despite the loss of NIS 110,000 in government funding," according to festival manager and Haifa Theater head Oded Kottler.

The festival will present 35 plays in nine different venues grouped around the Haifa Theater on April 16-19. Even the famed Prague Black Theater is coming with an enchanting dumb show, *Peter Pan*.

This year there are 11 new plays, six of which will compete for around NIS 10,000, the prize given to the best play. There are also 25 guest plays, as well as street theater and a convention.

The festival budget — which has no deficit — is a modest NIS 1.36 million. To have canceled or curtailed any of the programs would have cost the festival some NIS 450,000 in penalties and loss of revenue, Kottler said. He added that he got the green light to go ahead with everything from both the Haifa Municipality,

which provides most of the funding, and the Arts Authority, which imposed the cut.

"They've promised to somehow come up with the 250,000 to 300,000 shekels we still need," Kottler said. Private donors account for NIS 103,000 of the total budget.

The six competition plays include *Theater... It's the Opposite* from Avishai Milstein's experimental Notzar Theater; *The Miller's Daughter*, in Arabic, from the El Casaba Theater in Jerusalem; and *Nasr'adin*, the oriental (but human) Brer Rabbit, by Yitzhak Goren.

The five other premieres, which are performed fewer times than the competition plays, are a heady mix of nonsense like *Darya's Doggerel Warehouse*, puppets like *Freddy's Toyshop*, and drama like *Lutichky Kid*.

Artistic director Sinai Peter said the festival has moved up a grade this year, because about half of the new plays have been written

by playwrights whose usual audiences are adults. The inference was that plays like this don't talk down to kids.

One of the problems that children's theater faces, according to Peter, "is that school principals too often ask 'What's the message?' rather than 'Is it good theater?'" and good theater is what the festival tries to be about.

Tickets for the indoor performances go for NIS 30 to NIS 40, but the organizers promise deals that will cut the prices by about 50%. Like last year, there will be both an adult and a kid jury. This year, however, each will choose its own Best Play, with the cash prize going to the adults' choice.

TOWER RECORDS' TOP 15			
THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	WEEKS ON CHART	ARTIST
#1	1	7	FILM SOUND TRACK
#2	2	18	CRANBERRIES
#3	3	5	SHALOM HANOCH
#4	4	3	AVTIPUS
#5	5	72	BOAZ SHARABI
#6	6	2	ERAN TSUR
#7	7	6	VARIOUS ARTISTS
#8	8	2	VARIOUS ARTISTS
#9	9	3	ACHINOAM NINI
#10	10	29	RITA
#11	11	4	LUCIANO PAVAROTTI
#12	12	8	MASHINA
#13	13	5	YEHUDIT RAVITZ
#14	14	9	NIRVANA
#15	15	19	BON JOVI

Tower Records' top-selling albums for the previous week. RE = re-entry

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BUSINESS & FINANCE

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1995

Pressure mounts on central bank to cut rates

Rumors of devaluation fan expectations

JOSE ROSENFELD

PRESSURE mounted yesterday on the Bank of Israel to lower interest rates.

The Treasury, the Industry and Trade Ministry and the business sector called on the central bank to announce today a cut of one to two percent in next month's rates.

Expectations for some dramatic move reached a pitch yesterday as a wave of rumors circulated predicting a special deal between the Bank of Israel and the Treasury, whereby interest rates would be cut together with a devaluation of the shekel.

Other rumors linked a drop in interest rates with a reduction in government spending.

"Expectations for programs or devaluations are nonsense and not serious," said a Bank of Israel spokesman.

Although the Treasury and the business sector pinned their hopes on a low January Consumer Price Index to get the central bank to reduce high interest rates, Bank of Israel Governor Jacob Frenkel said there was no

reason to celebrate upon reviewing the index last week.

He noted the large increases in housing and wholesale prices as worrisome.

Fearing that Frenkel may be inclined to leave interest rates unchanged next month, Treasury officials and business leaders began warning in the past few days that should rates fail to drop, the economy is liable to go into recession.

Treasury director general David Brodet said that should rates remain unchanged it will cause instability in the capital, money and foreign currency markets.

He added that January's low index will assure inflation this year will be lower than in 1994.

Treasury officials are asking the Bank of Israel to lower rates by 1%.

Bank Hapoalim chief economist Ptachia Bar-Shavit said the central bank can afford to cut rates by 1% since, despite last month's rise in housing and wholesale prices, inflation is not growing faster than 12%, which is



Harish: All signs point to severe danger of harming economic growth unless interest rates are cut. (Stein/Harari)

slightly higher than the inflation goal for this year of between 8%-11%.

"Even if real interest rates are at 10% instead of 11%, the central bank will not send a message that it is being a pussy about inflation," he said.

Bar-Shavit added that a 1% cut

in interest rates will allow the shekel to devalue about 3% against the currency basket, enough to enable exporters to maintain their profitability.

He noted that unlike Mexico, where the currency was significantly overvalued, the shekel, despite last year's slow devaluation, has maintained its value.

Industry and Trade Minister Micha Harish called on Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on Sunday to hold an urgent cabinet meeting to review the latest economic developments and the danger facing economic growth.

Harish said "all the signs show, that under the continued situation of high interest rates, low exchange rates and the stock market under crisis, there is a severe danger of harming economic growth, job creation and a large imbalance in the current account."

Both Chamber of Commerce president Dan Gillerman and Manufacturers Association President Dan Propper have called for an immediate 2% reduction in interest rates.

Shavit cancels NIS 170m. Treasury bond issue

JOSE ROSENFELD

year, which have brought NIS 1.9 billion into the Treasury's coffers.

The high real interest rates on unlinked shekel bonds deriving from the Bank of Israel's tight monetary policy have begun pushing up index-linked bond yields, which have been lagging behind unlinked yields.

The poor provident fund returns last year, which have recently led to the massive flight of fund savers to bank savings pro-

grams, have also helped to push bond yields as the funds' demand for new bonds has dropped.

Shavit noted that the Treasury will also take into account the level of interest rates, the progress of privatization and budget performance data before going ahead with March's bond issue.

Bank Hapoalim chief economist Ptachia Bar-Shavit explained that the Treasury has enough maneuvering room since most of the government bond redemptions are concentrated during the middle of the year.

34 firms bid for radio franchises

HELEN KAYE

THIRTY-FOUR companies bid for seven regional commercial radio franchises yesterday.

Among those bidding for the lucrative Haifa, Dan and Haharoneh regions were Ayalon Radio and a group involving Egged, Shekem general manager Amnon Dick and Coop-Blue Square.

Fourteen groups bid in Sunday's round for Jerusalem, the Galilee and the Golan, the Negev and Eilat.

They included Efes Shtaim-Radio Jerusalem, Radio Tzafon-T-

fen (the Golan), Radio Sheva (the Negev) and Shidurei Eilat '95.

When the tenders were issued in December, the Second Television and Radio Authority declared that pirate radio stations would not be able to apply unless they ceased broadcasting before the issue date.

Former pirate Radio 10 was one of the bidders for the Negev region.

Franchisees will be required to

provide community and regionally oriented radio service with national news broadcasts at least three times a day. The first seven franchises are part of a two-stage plan which will have 16 radio stations in 11 regions around the country in one to two years.

The stations will broadcast on FM frequencies only and are expected to support themselves mainly from advertising revenues. Each of the 34 companies paid NIS 20,000 for the application and a further NIS 35,000 registration fee.

Shekem workers: Investigate Rabin

GALIT LIPKIS BECK

SHEKEM workers yesterday appealed to Attorney General Michael Ben-Yair to open a criminal investigation against Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin for allegedly violating sub judice laws when he charged that "Shekem's fired workers are parasites."

Rabin made the remarks while the labor court is hearing Shekem's workers' complaints against management over the firings.

Shekem's new owners, the

Elco group, fired 600 workers as part of the firm's recovery plan.

Avi Cohen, the workers' legal adviser, said Rabin's remarks are a violation of sub judice laws, which forbid publishing information on an issue negotiated in court if it could influence the court's ruling.

The workers, who said Rabin's remarks are likely to influence the court against them, demon-

strated opposite Rabin's office in Tel Aviv last week and demanded an apology.

In addition, chairman of the workers committee Itzhak Muel sent Rabin a copy of some of the things the prime minister wrote about Shekem three months ago in the company's booklet.

In the booklet, Rabin wrote "it has taken years to develop Shekem and turn it into one of the leading marketing chains in the country..."

Hevrat Ha'Ovdim in advanced talks to sell Koor Ind. to Shamrock Group-led consortium

GALIT LIPKIS BECK

HEVRAT Ha'Ovdim is in advanced negotiations to sell Koor Industries to a consortium headed by the US Shamrock Group, an investment firm controlled by the Disney family, a Histadrut source said yesterday.

Hevrat Ha'Ovdim's holdings in Koor total 21 percent, assuming conversion of all convertible securities and exercise of options and warrants.

Poslim Capital Markets has valued Koor at between \$1.2 billion and \$1.3b.

The Shamrock Group, which is active mainly in the communica-

tions field, has offered to buy 21% of Koor's shares and is interested in becoming a strategic investor in Koor.

Koor's major shareholder is

Bank Hapoalim, which has a 23% stake in the company. The Shamrock Group has previously expressed interest in the purchase of Koor shares several times.

About three years ago, the company asked to buy the Koor bonds the government held, which were convertible into

about 10% of Koor's shares.

The Knesset Finance Committee rejected the proposal, because the bid was not high enough.

The Shamrock Group's investment in Koor is part of its control of Migav Cable company - which it owns in partnership with Dankner Investments and Poalim Investments.

The other foreign group reportedly interested in the purchase of Koor is headed by the Belzberg family from Canada.

The family, which does not yet have any investments in Israel, has recently expressed interest in the purchase of real estate here.

Businessman Eliezer Fishman and Shaul Eisenberg's Israel Corporation have also expressed an interest in purchasing the Histadrut's shares in Koor.

The Histadrut has decided to sell its shares in Koor to cover Kupat Holim Cholim's debts.

The sale is also in the framework of Histadrut chairman Haim Ramon's policy to reduce the Histadrut's investment in business.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Sanbar to step down on April 6: Bank Leumi chairman Moshe Sanbar will step down on April 6, the same day as the bank's general shareholders meeting. Bank Leumi's board of directors decided earlier this week. Unconfirmed press reports said Yitzhak Hotfi, previously chairman of Tadiran, will take over from Sanbar.

Shohat asks for 19.4% rise in payments to Nazi victims: Finance Minister Avraham Shohat yesterday asked the Knesset Finance Committee and the Labor and Welfare Committee to update compensation payments by 19.4 percent to disabled Nazi persecution victims and disabled World War II fighters.

Eilat will be connected to Akaba power grid: Energy Ministry director-general Amos Ron and his Jordanian counterpart Fahr Adin Dagastani have agreed to connect Eilat to the Akaba power grid this June. The two countries will also link the seismic monitoring stations located in the region. An agreement for cooperation will be signed by the Israeli and Jordanian energy ministers in April.

Chambers of Commerce, Slovakian counterpart sign pact: The Chambers of Commerce of Israel and Slovakia have signed an economic cooperation agreement, and the two countries are expected to finalize a trade pact in April. Israel currently exports \$4.2 million to Slovakia, mainly precious stones and metals, and imports \$4.9m.

Urdu Industries has agreed to a \$14 million deal to sell 111 trailers to a US company within the next two years. The first shipment of 27 trailers will be delivered this year.

Mofet Venture Capital has granted consumer electronics developer Tius Elcon a \$200,000 loan. Mofet owns 12.4 percent of Tius' outstanding capital. If Tius is unable to return the sum, Mofet is entitled to additional shares in the company. Tius has also granted Mofet NIS 606,000 in share options.

Carmel Olefins employees ask for work dispute: The workers council of Carmel Olefins, an Oil Refineries subsidiary, asked the Haifa Histadrut yesterday to declare a work dispute.

MKs to discuss establishing inquiry into fall of stock market: The Knesset State Control Committee will discuss the idea of establishing a commission of inquiry into the fall of the stock market next Monday, at the suggestion of Dan Tichon (Likud), head of the finance committee's capital markets subcommittee. Tichon will also ask State Comptroller Miriam Ben-Porat to prepare a report on the issue.

Chicken farmers will be able to sell 20 percent more than their official quotas this year, the Knesset Finance Committee decided yesterday. A farmer whose quota is less than 100 tons, however, will be able to sell either 100 tons or 20% more than his quota, the higher of the two.

The Eden Inn Hotel chain has begun operations here recently, with the Havat Habaron Hotel in Zichron Ya'acov and the Eden Inn in nearby Beit Remeiz.

Ratio Oil Exploration suffers NIS 17.5m. annual net loss

COMPANY RESULTS

RACHEL NEIMAN

RATIO Oil Exploration has reported an annual net loss of NIS 17.5m., compared with a NIS 6.63m net loss in 1993.

Fourth quarter net losses were NIS 7.5 million, compared with NIS 4.9m. in the third quarter.

The company's main objective is oil exploration at the Gan Yavne site and the Tzofar, Dimona and Basalt sites.

Exploration expenses for 1994 were NIS 13.26m. and administrative expenses were NIS 9.6m.

Orlitz Engineering Company announced a decline in 1994 net profits to NIS 2.48m. from NIS 3.2m. in 1993.

Revenues went up to

NIS 61.5m. from NIS 61.2m., while the price per share fell to NIS 0.27 from NIS 0.38.

The company, which deals in composite plastic and metal products, reported a net loss of NIS 281,000 for the fourth quarter, compared with a net gain of NIS 545,000 in the previous quarter.

Modi'in Energy posted an annual net loss of NIS 2.9m., compared with a 1993 net loss of NIS 1.64m.

Modi'in experienced a net loss of NIS 386,000 for the fourth quarter, compared with a NIS 739,000 net loss in the previous quarter.

ISRAELI MONEY MARKETS

Patah (foreign currency deposit rates) (21.2.95)

Currency (deposit term)	3 MONTHS	6 MONTHS	12 MONTHS
U.S. dollar (\$50,000)	3.575	5.500	6.250
Pound sterling (£100,000)	4.700	6.100	6.250
German mark (DM 200,000)	3.500	3.750	4.375
Swiss franc (SF 200,000)	2.825	2.875	3.500
Yen (10 million yen)	0.750	0.825	0.875

(Rates vary higher or lower than indicated according to deposit)

Shekel Foreign Exchange Rates* (20.2.95)

Currency basket	Buy	Sell	Banknotes	Buy	Sell	Rep. Rates*
U.S. dollar	3.2830	3.4310	2.25	3.07	3.0030	
German mark	2.2811	2.0232	1.99	2.08	2.0359	
Pound sterling	2.6220	2.0506	1.99	2.08	2.0359	
French franc	4.7221	4.7067	0.85	0.80	4.7509	
Japanese yen (100)	0.5803	0.5895	0.85	0.80	0.5851	
Dutch guilder	3.0838	3.1071	3.01	3.16	3.0927	
Swedish krona	1.8751	1.8508	1.77	1.85	1.8192	
Swiss franc	2.5835	2.4944	4.70	2.35	2.4071	
Spanish peseta	0.4094	0.4152	0.40	0.42	0.4111	
Norwegian krona	0.4600	0.4685	0.45	0.47	0.4658	
Danish krone	0.5121	0.5194	0.50	0.52	0.5153	
Finnish mark	0.6813	0.6835	0.64	0.65	0.6458	
Canadian dollar	2.1206	2.1305	2.06	2.07	2.0550	
Australian dollar	2.2036	2.2347	2.19	2.22	2.1370	
S. African rand	0.8432	0.8581	0.87	0.88	0.8625	
Belgian franc (10)	0.5822	0.5861	0.75	0.76	0.8486	
Austrian schilling (10)	2.6703	2.9108	2.82	1.01	0.9886	
Italian lire (1,000)	1.8883	1.8947	1.83	1.93	1.8778	
Japanese yen (100)	—	—	0.85	0.80	0.8509	
Irish punt	3.7358	3.8494	4.50	4.57	4.2758	
Spanish peseta (100)	4.6804	4.7027	2.58	2.41	2.5813	

* These rates vary according to bank. ** Bank of Israel.

SOURCE: BANK LEUMI

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FFr	0.2679/63	0.1231/33	18.91/94	0.2430/33	—

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'Dinitz's spending could have misled Agency clerks'

DESPITE former Jewish Agency chairman Simcha Dinitz's claim that the agency had all the information it needed to identify his personal expenses — and that therefore he did not need to file reports — there were several cases where agency clerks could easily have been misled, cross-examination of Dinitz revealed yesterday.

Prosecutor Shimon Dolan cited several cases in which one of Dinitz's personal expenses could easily have been interpreted by agency clerks as institutional. For instance, Dinitz once vacationed at a hotel in California, and gave the hotel his agency American Express card for a "signature on file," so that any expenses discovered after he had checked out could be charged to this card. The hotel later billed \$126 worth of expenses to the card, and the agency paid the bill.

Dinitz admitted that in this case, the clerk could have assumed the expenses were institutional. "With hotel expenditures, I assumed the clerk would consider them to be job-related," he said.

However, he added, there was no way he could have prevented this, since the charges were all put on his bill after he had checked out, so he never knew about them.

In another case, Dolan cited a meal at a Lord and Taylor's department store. Again, Dinitz admitted that meals were usually job-related — since he was usually hosting someone — and that

EVELYN GORDON

therefore, "there could have been a mistake here."

"But that was it. There weren't any other [cases like this]," he said. "I never thought for a minute that it was okay to use the [agency] credit card for hotels and meals. Why? Because it could mislead [the agency]."

Dinitz is on trial in the Jerusalem District Court for fraud and breach of trust, for allegedly charging some \$22,000 worth of personal expenses to the agency. He has been testifying for the past two weeks, and yesterday was the first day of cross-examination.

Dolan also said an agency clerk could easily have thought two purchases at Fuller's Stationery Store were job-related, and Judge Shalom Brenner agreed. Dinitz responded that they could really have been job-related. However, he said, when he eventually did an accounting for all his private expenditures with the agency years later, "I listed it as a private expense whenever there was a doubt."

Dolan also charged that as long as he thought he could get away with it, Dinitz tried to repay as little as possible. In 1991, he noted, when the agency did its first accounting with Dinitz, Dinitz was asked to repay \$5,000. He did this in several installments, and without interest. In 1992, however, following press reports of the affair, Dinitz asked the

agency comptroller to do a check of what he owed — and afterwards, he repaid \$17,000 in one shot, with interest.

"I object to your inference," Dinitz responded, saying the press reports were certainly not a factor. Even in 1991, he said, there had been inquiries on the subject from reporters, and "the difference between publication and the potential for publication is very thin."

"I know the media," he said. He had not paid interest the first time, he continued, because he had asked agency finance director Zvi Barak what to do, and Barak had not told him to pay interest. Dinitz said if Barak had told him to, he would have done so.

The second time, he said, he went beyond the bounds of duty because he was sick of the fuss that was being made over the incident.

"But in all my years in the agency, I never knew anyone who repaid a debt with interest," he said.

Dolan also tried to show that Dinitz had been careful to check that he got what was owed him in terms of salary, but never checked to see that personal expenses billed to the agency were deducted from his salary as they were supposed to be.

Dinitz, however, said that, like many other Israelis, he had never checked any part of his pay slip except the net — and often not even that.

Meretz fighting Ram-Labor Histadrut alignment

MICHAEL YUDELMAN

MERETZ objects to a Ram-Labor alignment in the Histadrut and will act to block it, Histadrut Parliament Chairman Ran Cohen of Meretz said at Sunday's Histadrut coalition meeting.

The coalition leaders were to have appointed the team in charge of forming the Ram-Labor alignment at the meeting. However, due to the controversy within Ram caused by Meretz's and Shas's opposition to the move, Ram's representatives for the team could not be chosen.

Labor Party leaders and Histadrut Chairman Haim Ramon recently decided to unite Ramon's list Ram and Labor in the Histadrut faction, to pave Ramon's way back to the party. It is also possible that Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin will offer Ramon a ministerial position in his cabinet in a few months, and it is therefore crucial that the maverick Ramon return to the party by that time.

But Ram's partners, Shas and Meretz, came out strongly against this move, fearing that it would strengthen Labor's faction, while rendering them devoid of power and status in the Histadrut. Meretz leaders said that the idea of a Ram-Labor alignment is ridiculous, and that Ramon was just as likely to run with Meretz in the 1996 elections than to return to Labor.

Court accepts secret tapes as evidence in Deri trial

THE prosecution in the trial of former interior minister Aryeh Deri yesterday introduced into evidence a tape, recorded secretly by witness Ya'acov Shmulevitz, in which defendant Moshe Weinberg tells of a trip to England he financed for himself and Deri.

Shmulevitz said Weinberg told him the trip cost \$10,000-\$11,000. He said the first-class plane tickets cost Weinberg about \$2,500, as did the luxury car and driver he hired for their entire stay. He also said the smallest expenditure on the trip was the \$500 Weinberg paid for Havana cigars for Deri.

Weinberg's lawyer, Pinna Devorin, asked

the Jerusalem District Court not to accept the tape as evidence. She argued that Shmulevitz is neither a policeman nor an expert in recording tapes. Shmulevitz, she added, admitted making several recordings on previously used tapes that he had no further use for. Moreover, she said, the recorder he used was not produced in court and, therefore, the defense had no chance to examine it.

Judge Miriam Naor, however, overruled her objection, saying there is nothing in the law that says that only policemen are permitted to make secret recordings, or that recordings made on a previously used tape are inad-

missible as evidence.

Shmulevitz said that after he recorded some 10 tapes, he began to fear that someone would break into his home to steal them or other documents he had relating to the Lev Banim Yeshiva and the Nebi Samwil affair, the two focuses of the case. Therefore, he decided to place the tapes in the office safe of Haifa lawyer Tamar Ullman.

The tape the court accepted yesterday was recorded on September 6, 1987, during a dinner at Jerusalem's Yossi Peking restaurant. At the dinner were Shmulevitz, Weinberg and Eliezer (Lazer) Kein.

(Itim)

Court blocks deal for collecting organization tax from teachers

EVELYN GORDON

THE High Court of Justice yesterday issued a temporary injunction preventing the state and the Teachers Union from signing an agreement to enable collection of the organization tax from teachers.

The injunction was issued in response to a petition by the rival Association of Secondary School Teachers, which will be heard on Thursday. According to attorney Oded Calamaro, who prepared the petition, the agreement was due to be signed "any day now."

The Association of Secondary School Teachers wants to prevent the Teachers Union from collecting the tax until a census is taken to determine which teachers belong to which union. Otherwise, it charges, the union will collect the tax from many teachers who do not wish to be part of it.

The petition charged that many teachers listed as members by the Teachers Union have told the association that this is simply not true — they are not members and they do not want to be.

Some of these so-called members, Calamaro charged, were enlisted when the Teachers Union circulated a form to all teachers telling them to fill it out and return it if they wanted a gift. Few teachers bothered to read to the end of the form to find out that it was a union enrollment form, he said.

Furthermore, he said, the Teachers Union was at one time part of the Histadrut, and when it broke away, it took all the teachers who had joined it because they were Histadrut members with it. However, he said, many of these teachers were Histadrut members only because they had joined Kupat Holim Clalit. Now that the national health law has severed the connection between membership in Clalit and membership in the Histadrut, he said, some of these people might prefer to join the association.

The petition notes that Education Ministry Director-General Shimon Shoshani favors arranging a census. However, it said, the Teachers Union opposes it.



Ruth Weissberg leaves the Petah Tikva police station yesterday after questioning.

(Gideon Markovitz / IFFA)

Nimrodi's sister questioned on wiretapping

RAINE MARCUS

OFFER Nimrodi's sister, Ruth Weissberg, a member of the management committee of Hachsharat Hayishuv, was questioned under caution about illegal wiretapping by police yesterday.

Last week Nimrodi, editor-in-chief and publisher of *Ma'ariv* and owner of Hachsharat Hayishuv, was questioned for six days running about his alleged role in commissioning widespread wiretapping by private investigators on the phones, cellular phones, and faxes of over 200 businessmen, politicians,

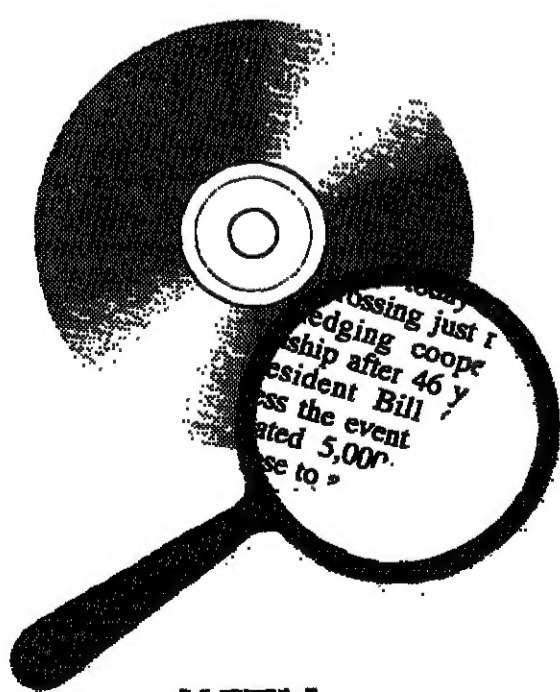
and senior media personnel.

Private investigators Rafi Friedman and Ya'acov Tsur are awaiting trial on 40 counts of wiretapping. A prosecution witness, a private investigator, gave police information on Ruth Weissberg in connection with wiretapping. A police source said that she is not suspected of being involved with Friedman and Tsur.

On Thursday, Friedman and Tsur are expected to argue be-

fore the High Court of Justice that they should be given all the prosecution's evidence to assist them in their defense. In late December, Tel Aviv Magistrate's Court ruled that they were entitled to the evidence, but State Attorney Dorit Beinisch filed a petition requesting the High Court not to transfer it, on the grounds that it would interfere with ongoing police investigations into related cases. Her petition was followed by a similar one by security company owner David Spector.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Factory worker burns to death

A factory worker burned to death yesterday when he fell into an industrial oven. Samyon Friedman, 35, of Hadera, was an oven cleaner at the Hod Lavan plant in the Emek Hefer industrial area, and apparently tripped and fell into the oven. He died within minutes. Netanya police think the death was caused by negligence, as workers are not supposed to approach the ovens while they are in operation.

Knesset takes tusks off display

Meretz MK Naomi Chazan took the Knesset to task over a pair of elephant tusks. The tusks, a gift to the Knesset, will be taken off display near the cabinet's rooms and put in storage instead. "Hunting elephants in general, and for their tusks in particular, is forbidden by international treaties and African law, as is the trade in ivory," Chazan, an African affairs expert, said. "I don't think it proper to continue to display the tusks — evidence of the brutal hunting and attempted extinction of an entire species — in the Knesset."

Immigrant scientists protest cuts

Some 40 immigrant scientists yesterday held a vigil outside the Absorption Ministry and the Treasury in Jerusalem to protest the cutting of the Giladi Plan for outstanding immigrant scientists. The program was to have been granted NIS 18 million to finance 300 top-notch researchers annually, but, the scientists said, the Treasury has allocated only NIS 15m., which will mean they have to give up a pension plan.

Absorption Minister Yair Tzaban, who met the scientists, promised to raise the issue with Finance Minister Avraham Shohat.

Agency board adds 23 Israelis

The Jewish Agency Board of Governors, currently meeting in Jerusalem, has added 23 new Israeli members. They include academics, such as Bar-Ilan University President Shlomo Elkstein and Hebrew University Prof. Shlomo Avineri, Mayors Ronni Milo of Tel Aviv and Amram Mifzoz of Haifa and Zionist Forum leader Natan Shbaransky. Until now, the board has had 121 members.

Standing army to pay health tax

Members of the standing army who are sole providers in their family will pay 3.6 percent of their salaries as health tax, while the others will pay 2.4%.

This arrangement, which will go in effect immediately, was agreed upon yesterday by Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Health Minister Ephraim Sneh, Finance Minister Avraham Shohat, and Labor and Social Affairs Minister Ora Namir.

Until the new national health insurance system, the IDF paid health fund membership fees for professional soldiers and their families. Civilians pay 3.2% health tax on the first NIS 2,000 in gross income, and 4.8% on the rest. The new arrangement will add tens of millions of shekels to the National Insurance Institute's tax funds.